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The Half-Blood; or, The Panther of the Plains.

BY EDWARD S. ELLIS.

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MINERS," "SETH JONES," "BILL BIDDON," ETC., ETC.



"I WILL TELL YOU, BEFORE THE EARTH DRINKS UP YOUR BLOOD WHY YOU SHOULD DIE BY MY HANDS."

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OR,

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRAPPERS.

ON a bright morning in early summer in 1824, two trappers were lying on a bluff of the Kansas River, looking down on the stream below where they had set their trap.

They were awaiting their prey amid a scene of the wildest beauty. Beneath them—shaded by the blue-foliaged ash, and the long-leaved willow—rolled the clear waters of the prairie stream, murmuring its song of progress as it poured onward to mingle its tide with the flood of the turbid Missouri.

Here and there the sunlight stole through the rich foliage, lighting up the surface of the gliding flood, and aiding it to reflect back nature's drapery, which here hung in festoons from every bough. Fragrance from a myriad of wild flowers loaded the air, and the birds, in unrestrained freedom, caroled their sweetest notes. It was nature's domain, tinted by the rich hues of summer, where the mind alive to beauty would have reveled with delight.

The oldest trapper was an Englishman, named Edward Murtel, who, during the war of 1812, had deserted from his Majesty's service, immediately preceding the battle of New Orleans. In the course of his wanderings he found his way to St. Louis, where he married; but taking a distaste to his wife, he deserted her soon after her first child was born, and fled to the mountain streams. Murtel had received a liberal education, but being cursed with an impatient and discontented spirit, at the first reverse of life, he sought forgetfulness in dissipation, and while in one of these fits, he enlisted as a common soldier in the British Army. Discontent, like some evil spirit, seemed to have goaded him from one folly to another, until it drove him beyond civilization.

Harry Harmer, his companion, was a Kentuckian, and in every respect Murtel's opposite. He had aided his countrymen under General Jackson to defend New Orleans, and afterward, without purpose more definite than to place himself beyond restraint, he followed up the windings of the Mississippi until he fell in with a party of trappers starting for the Missouri.

With the least possible persuasion he consented to make one of the party, and here, contented as an Indian, he now rolled on the green sward, or baited his trap in the mountain floods. The uncertain gains which rewarded his labors but little interested him—the excitement was the irresistible charm which bound him to his present life.

"I tell you, Murtel," said he, "but this is fine, stretching out your legs here in the sun, sleeping, eating and doing just as you please."

"With now and then a scrimmage with the Arapahoes thrown in by way of variety. That's the best part of it, Harry."

"Yes; we couldn't get along without that; keeps us from spiling, and makes a feller feel at home in these parts; and reminds him of old times. I say, Harry, while we're watching these traps spin us a yarn."

"What shall it be about? the last war?"

"Hang it, no; we've hed enough o' that for the present; give us an Ingin yarn, a reg'lar tearing adventure, that'll make a feller's hair stand on end."

"Waal, to tell the truth," pursued Harmer, "I have been in some scrapes in my time, but I always manage to get out ag'in, without being much the worse. You see these beauty spots I've got, in the shape of scars on my face and head, that have been given me now and then."

"Don't be so garrulous, but go ahead with your yarn, whatever it is going to be."

"Waal," resumed Harmer, puffing away at his short black pipe, "about twenty years ago, when I wasn't much more than a boy, me and Tom Haberly took to the woods in Wisconsin on one of our hunts. The red-skins were particularly cantankerous in them times, and we know'd there was just about as much chance of losing our ha'r as getting back ag'in, but, we hadn't had a chance to stretch our legs for nearly a year, and we didn't much care whether we got back ag'in or not, so that we hed our fun."

"Waal, Murtel, we went fifty miles right into the heart of the red-skin country, without getting the first glimpse of a red-skin. Not exactly sartin what to make of this state of matters, me and Tom separated one morning, and promised to come together again, at a place about fifteen miles away on a branch of the Wisconsin.

"Arter leavin' Tom, I tramped till noon and didn't get nary a glimpse of a red dog, and feeling pretty well tuckered out, I stretched out under a big chestnut and went to sleep. I snoozed straight ahead like a Mississippi steamer, till about the middle of the afternoon, when I woke myself up. Takin' a look at the primin' of my gun, I riz gracefully up and started off, as I hadn't much time to spare if I expected to meet Tom at the place where we had agreed. I done some tall walkin' and was still goin' ahead when I snuffed smoke in the air. I stopped all of a suddint, for I knew there was a camp-fire somewhere not fur off, but, fur the life of me I couldn't tell where. I stuck up my nose and smelt and snuffed just like a panther, when he gets scent of his prey, and bime-by I observed it cum from off toward my left, and I begun crawling through the bushes toward it.

"I had gone about a hundred yards, when in the open woods, what did I see but a big red-skin, setting by the fire a-noddin' half asleep. I could see his head bumping forward, just as though he was bidding in an auction room, and once or twice he came mighty near pitching forward into the fire. I grinned at him awhile, and then concluded to slip up to him and settle his hash with my knife, when, as luck would have it, I stepped on a stick. When it cracked under my feet it sounded to me as loud as one of the cannons we peppered you red-coats with at New Orleans. You know when a red-skin sleeps, he can hear better than when he's awake, and the dog reared up his head, just as though some one had given a yank at his top-knot. Afore I could get my knife unslung and ready, the dog was on his feet and tearing away like mad through the woods.

"As he was running just the way I wanted to travel—that is, toward the point where I was to meet Tom, I jist set up a yell and started after him. He run so fast that I found mighty quick that I should have a tight job to overtake him, but I felt just like running and I dug ahead.

"Waal, Murtel, we had it for nearly half an hour, and as near as I could calculate, I had gained two inches and three-quarters, when, from behind a whopping big tree, another red-skin hopped out, and away the two went together side by side. This looked qu'ar to me; but, as they kept running, in course I follered after. I knew I could settle one if he should turn round, and then me and the other would be equal, and the one that got t'other one's ha'r deserved to get it.

"In the next half-mile I gained one inch and a half, when, as true as I am setting here, a third Ingin started up, and I had three red-skins in their war-paint running away from me. Things began to look shaky, for the idea of a young man such as I was, chasing three painted Ingins, was just about the tallest thing I had ever heard tell on before or since. 'Harry,' says I, 'Harry, yer's something wrong as sure as you're born. Them three painted imps ain't running away from you, 'cause they're afraid of you, that's sartin.'

They're just running you into a trap, that's what they're doing, and if you ain't mighty keerful you'll never git out of this piece of woods ag'in."

"You see the quairest part of the whole thing was that each of the last two red skins should have jumped up one after the other and joined the other one. If they had only kept still they would have had me right between 'em, where they could have used me up as quick as you could say Jack Robinson."

"Yes, that was rather queer," said Murtel, with a meaning emphasis.

"What do you mean?"

"Only just what I say, that it was very queer—very."

"If you don't believe it, you can tell the rest of the story yourself."

"Of course I believe it—every word."

Harmer looked as though uncertain how to take this remark. He smoked his pipe a few minutes in silence, and then made up his mind to proceed with the narrative.

"I thought over matters and things about as fast as I was running, and made up my mind to jump off to one side myself and do some traveling. The trouble was that the Ingins kept glancing back, and would be sure to see me the minute I turned, and there was no doubt they'd foller. But I could run a little bit faster than them, and I wasn't much afraid of their overtaking me. The dickens of it was that if they got to popping away at me with their shooting-irons, I stood a powerful chance of getting hit."

"I was looking around for a good place to slide off, when, as the Old Boy would have it, I cotched my foot in a root and turned a half dozen summersets before I could stop. I hung fast to my rifle, and found I hadn't hurt that much, if I had barked my shins somewhat."

"I got up as quick as lightning and looked around. Not a glimpse could I cotch of the red-skins. They had whisked out of sight like so many shadows, and I begun to think maybe I had been chasing spooks. They hadn't time to get out of sight by running, and I didn't see any tree big enough to hide their bodies."

"Howsomever, be that as it may, I made up my mind that the best thing I could do was to get out of that particular neighborhood as quick as possible, if not a little quicker. So I let on steam ag'in, and started off on a track that I was sartin wouldn't make me bump heads ag'in the Ingins. I s'pose I'd taken 'bout a dozen steps when *slap, whiz*, went three guns, and I heard the bullets whistle by my ears. Screwing my eye over my shoulder, I see'd the three red-skins coming like a greased streak of lightning. 'Harry,' says I, 'Harry, you're in fur it, and now teach these onchristian varmints how to travel. Let yourself out.'

"Wal, sir, there's no mistake but what I did let myself out. I had got kinder warmed up to the business, and the way I tore through them bushes would have scared a wild panther. But, travel as I pleased, I couldn't get out of sight of them confounded varmints. The imps had been playing 'possum all the while, when they let me gain on 'em, and I rather guess that it was them that was teaching me a thing or two."

"I don't know how the case would have ended, if it hadn't been stopped in a manner that none of us expected, leastways I didn't know nothin' about it, nor wa'n't lookin' for it neither. As I was tearing along, I noticed the woods were getting more open, and it wasn't long afore I cotched sight of a big stream of water right ahead. I can tell you this made things look dark, but I was in fur it, and there wasn't any help. I seen the bluffs were high, and I calculated as how there was going to be the tallest kind of a row somewhere in that section of the country."

"The next minute I was on the edge of the bluffs and found them nearly fifty feet high; but I hadn't any time to stop and measure the inches, for the screeching dogs were close behind me, yelping like mad to think they had got me in so beautiful a trap. Looking back

for a minute I hopped over. When I struck the water, I kept on going down, till my feet hit the gravel on the bottom, when I riz ag'in. The Injuns, without saying anything about their shootin' irons, could have cracked my head a dozen times from where they stood with their tomahawks; but I could see they wanted to capture me, from the way they acted, and I hadn't quite made up my mind to that, as I knowed well enough what they would do with a feller if they only once got him foul, in their clutches.

"The jump was such a big one that I was in hopes they wouldn't foller me, but the whole three came sailing over after me. While they was spinning down through the air, one of 'em give a screech, and when he went down didn't come to the top ag'in, for he had daylight let through his body by a bullet from Tom's gun, who had just reached t'other side of the river in time to see the fun.

"There was two Ingins now left for me to manage, and the way them dogs know how to swim, one is about all a feller can 'tend to at a time, when you're both in the water. So I sung out to Tom to load ag'in as quick as he could and give another one his last sickness; but there wasn't any use for that, as he'd seen how things was shaping themselves, and was working like a saw-mill.

"The two made for me as soon as they was in the water, and for a little while I had 'em both to manage. The minute they heard Tom's gun go off they seen there wasn't any use trying to take me prisoner, so they concluded to raise my ha'r. The one nearest made a lunge at me with his knife, but I warded it off and give him a stick with my own.

"Wal, my respected friend, I think you'll own up that I was in rather a tight fix?"

"Of course, if you were really there."

"Do you mean to insinuate that I wasn't?" flared up Harmer.

"Not at all—not at all, if you say this is true, that is, if you give me your word, then it must be so, even if it never happened."

"What do you mean by such talk as that?" demanded Harry, more than half inclined to get angry and break off the story, at this doubly interesting point, without so much as the stereotyped announcement of "to be continued," but the irritating Englishman was hard at times to understand. To tell the truth, it needed but a moment's scrutiny of the conversation of the two, at any hour of the day, to see that very little love existed between them. The common danger from Arapahoe, Pawnee, and other hostile tribes, kept them together in a sort of friendship, but the slumbering dislike, if not hatred, between the two was ready to be fanned into a blaze at any time, whenever a cause sufficiently exciting should occur.

"I can tell you one thing," added Harmer, in a significant tone, "if any one calls me a liar, I'm ready to settle the question with him with a knife or gun as he may think best."

"Wait till some one contradicts you," was the sullen response of Murtel, "it seems to me you're getting rather touchy, for one that gives out he is telling the truth. Go on with your yarn, and when you get through I'll tell you whether I believe it or not. Go ahead, for you'll bev to shet up as soon as a beaver comes toward our traps."

Thus appealed to, the Kentuckian swallowed his vexation, smoked a few moments, and then resumed:

"Just about this time, Tom got his gun loaded ag'in, and drawed bead on the copper-colored gentleman who was so anxious to get my top-knot. He didn't miss him, or even graze him, but sent the pill plump through his noodle, and wiped him out as slick as grease, which was very convenient for me, as I had come to the conclusion that I had too big a contract on my hands, and was willing to let out a part of the job.

"I was now left with one dog, who didn't stand on ceremony, but went straight to business. The first compliment he paid me, he

gave me an ugly slash with his knife, whereupon I made a circle around my head with my toothpick, and when I brought it down, it glanced over his knife-handle and flew out of my hand.

"This left me without any weapon at all, and then I was in a tight box, wasn't I?"

"Yes, certainly, a very tight one."

"What would you have done?"

"Asked the Indian to excuse me until I could find my knife, or maybe he might lend me his'n."

"No, you wouldn't either."

"I'd sung out to my friend on shore that if he wanted to do me a favor, now was his time to do it."

"That would have been the most sensible, and that's just what I did, keeping my eye upon my dusky friend all the while, to be sure that he didn't give me a sly stick. You see, I had been so hard pressed at the beginning of the fight that I had dropped my gun, and it lay at the bottom of the stream. The Injin could swim just as well as I could, and the way matters stood, the chances were rather ag'in' me. So I sings out for Tom to blaze away with his gun again, and see how near he could come to me without hitting me.

"You're too clus together," he sung back.

"Never mind, crack away," I called back.

"But you're so mixed up that jest as like as not I'll hit you as t'other scamp."

"You may as well shoot me as for him to stick me! He's got a knife, and I haven't got nothin'. So he'll finish me, if you don't."

"S'posen I bit you?"

"I won't blame you."

"If I kill you, you won't persecute me?"

"Hang it, no!" I yelled, for I was getting mad as blazes.

"See if you can't get further apart," he sung out, after he held his rifle p'nted at us for a few minutes. "You keep dodging in and out so much, I'm blamed afeard I'll drill a hole through both of you."

"I'll try!"

"But the confounded red-skin seen what the trouble was, and the way he stuck and hung fast to me would have made a beaver sick. He floundered around in the water just like a sturgeon, and if there was any difference in the way a feller handled himself in the water, it was in his favor.

"Wal, we danced around there for five or ten minutes, I fighting with my naked hands against the imp with his hunting-knife, and only keeping him from killing me by the care he had taken from getting his head in the way of Tom's gun. This way of fighting couldn't last long, and I yelled out ag'in to Tom:

"Fire, Tom, for I can't stand this any longer."

"All right, shy to one side as much as possible."

"Now, blaze away!" I called out, seeing an ugly look coming into the Indian's eye.

"Ay, ay, here goes."

"And just then Tom fired, and I'll be hanged if he didn't hit me instead of the red-skin. He hit the only well arm that I had, so that I was knocked completely out the ring.

"You've hit me!" I sung out.

"Never mind, Harry, you ain't dead yet!"

"Tom had seen the trouble, and throwing down his gun he plunged into the water and came toward us.

"The Indian had seen him afore he got to us, and making a long dive he come up out of our reach, and as neither of us could bring a gun to bear upon him, he got safe to shore, and walked off in the woods, whistling Yankee Doodle to think how nice he had give us the slip. Tom dove down, fetched up my rifle, and we got back to land ag'in."

"That was quite an adventure," remarked Murtel, "and if it hadn't been for your friend Tom, it would have been your last one, that's certain."

"Yes, we had to stick by each other, or we'd never got out of the Injin country."

"You saw quite enough to satisfy you, I've no doubt," remarked Murtel.

"Not quite," replied Harmer; "we wur in the middle of the Injin country, and we seen streaked times afore we got out."

"What did you do with your wounded arms?"

"They didn't amount to much, though they felt pretty bad when we was in the water; but, as we expected to run afoul the varmints ag'in afore we got back to the settlement, we concluded to stay where we was till they got well. So we made our way to a cave a little way off, and crawled in. The cave was right along the water, and the mouth was covered with bushes, as there wan't much chance of our being disturbed by red-skins unless some of 'em stowed themselves away in the cave, and had seen us go in. When we entered it, we found a big bear there, and as he was anxious to show fight, we just toppled him over and put him out of the way, and took up our quarters.

"I didn't s'pose my cuts would lay me up for more than a day or two, but instead of getting well, they kept getting worse; and in a day or two a fever set in that put me clean out of my head. I was pretty sick, I can tell you, but Tom nursed me up like an old granny would nurse a sick kitten. He made me a cup of oak leaves, and fetched me in some cool water every day from a spring; and he never went into the woods but that he brought back some kind of game and cooked it up for me as nice as my old mother could have done in Kentucky.

"I hated to be such a bull calf, but there was no help for it, and Tom told me just to lay still and keep easy and I would come all right in a little while. One day, when he was out, I felt so much better that I got on my feet and tried to make myself believe I was well; but my head swung round and the cave turned upside down, and I keeled over like a baby that had never been learned to walk.

"I wanted to crawl out into the woods several times, but Tom wouldn't hear any such thing, but he know'd well enough he'd have to pick me up and carry me back ag'in."

"One day, just as it was getting dark, Tom came in in a big hurry and told me that he was afeard of trouble, as he had seen 'sign' a half-dozen times, and he thought as like as not the varmints had got scent of our whereabouts. Tom had always been careful in coming back to the cave, for he knowed what sharp imps them red dogs are. You know they are as bad as bloodhounds to scent anything."

"What was the sign that your friend bad seen?" inquired Murtel.

"He had found an Injin canoe a mile or two above where we first went there, and he generally came down in that to the cave so as to hide his trail. He was afeard that some of the varmints had seen him make his way downstream; but he had some hopes, as he hadn't seen any of the red-skins himself.

"Wal, Tom stayed in the cave until we were short of meat, and then he said he'd have to slip out in the woods and try it ag'in. I felt a little dub'us about his going away and leaving me alone, and I knowed he was a little on-easy, the way he hung around, when he was ready to go; but he didn't say nothin', and I kinder urged him to hurry away, as there wasn't any use of his waiting, when the thing had to be done.

"Arter he'd gone, I crawled to the mouth of the cave, as I had often done afore, and laid there as still as if I was dead, looking through the bushes out upon the river. I hadn't been there a half-hour, when two canoes, both chock full of savages, in their war-paint went by, and purty soon another followed, so there was as much as thirty or forty of them that I seen go by. That showed that Tom had told the truth, when he said he had seen 'sign' pretty powerful.

"Howsomever, the canoes didn't stop, and so I thought they didn't know anything about our hiding-place, though I'se mighty 'feard they'd see Tom on his way back. He generally

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come in about noon, and when he missed that, I supposed he was using a little extra caution to dodge the red-skins. But the afternoon came and went, and it got dark, and there wasn't anything seen of Tom.

"Then morning broke, and the day passed, and another night, and not a sight nor a sound did I see or hear of Tom. By this time, I knew something had happened and there wasn't any use in looking for Tom, for I shouldn't see him ag'in."

"Wal, Murtel, I needn't tell you I begun to feel a little streaked just about then. There I was alone with such a fever that there was no need of kindling a fire at night to keep warm; and, so it wa'n't likely I'd improve and get well very fast in the cave, as I was pretty nearly starved to death, and was so hot with my fever that I had to crawl down to the edge of the river every now and then and take such a swig of water that I was sure I lowered the stream several inches."

"So, when next morning came, I was sure I felt a little better. Maybe it was because I knew it was sure death to stay where I was that I come to the conclusion that I was improving, and that I was well enough to get up and start for home."

"Accordingly, on the second morning, I staggered to my feet and went to the mouth of the cave. The first thing that I set eye on was Tom's canoe floating by without a living soul in it. That showed plain enough that something had gone wrong, and that the poor fellow was gone sure enough."

"I stood there awhile, when I took another look across the country, when I saw, just across the creek, another canoe full of red-skins, but they jumped and danced before my eyes just as though I had been on a big spree, and hadn't fully got over it yet; and while I was trying to make 'em set still, everything swum around worse nor ever, and I tipped over on my back, completely laid out by the fever."

"When my senses come back ag'in, I was among the Ingins. They had got me sure, arter all the fuss, I had made to keep out of their way. Wal, it was the best thing that could have happened; for, if they hadn't found me I wouldn't be here to-day, but would have gone under with the fever, sure, while they wouldn't put me to the stake as long as I was sick; and so, you see, a feller had a little chance."

"Just at the time I came to and got my reckonin' so as to be able to tell what had happened, one of 'em, that I s'pose was the Medicine Man, had a lot of yarbs and plants, and was doctorin' and dosin' me as nice as if I was a sick lamb, instead of a great strapping boy of a hunter. I could see that as long as they believed I was sick there wasn't much chance of my getting hurt, so I played the 'possum till the dogs knowed I was well, and then it wouldn't do to try it longer. But I made as though I was dreadfully weak, and that give me rope for a few days longer."

"The Ingins that had me was the worst tribe in Wisconsin, and when I fell into their hands I had jumped out of the fryingpan into the fire, for they wa'n't the people to stand any nonsense with a poor dog like me. They must have belonged to some town a good many miles off, for they led me on the longest tramp I ever took. Our company numbered six, and I don't believe there ever was a minute out of the twenty-four hours when I hadn't two or three pairs of eyes fixed on me. The minute I had started to run, I would have had a whole battery of tomahawks buried in my head and back, and if that hadn't stopped me, as many rifle balls would have been sure to do it."

"We got well up into Wisconsin when one of the biggest storms you ever heard tell on come up. It rained, blew, hailed and snowed as if it was making up for all that was needed for several years to come. Ingins and hunters are generally used to the worst kind of storms, but we got a *leettle* too much then, and hauled up under the cover of a big rock to wait until it was over and had held up a bit. It was

just dark when the storm begun, and as it didn't stop a bit the Ingins decided to camp where they was. They had hard work to get a fire started, but they made out to do it at last, and got enough sticks together to keep it going till morning.

"Instead of watching me all night as they generally done, they decided to sleep. The way they tied me up was a caution. My hands behind my back, my ankles and knees together, and then a string from each elbow and knee to the wrists of the sleeping Ingins. I s'pose I must have been the first one to go to sleep, for I remember, when I shut my eyes, the last thing I seen was the Ingins smoking and nodding their heads; but we all got to sleep at last."

"In the middle of a dream about panthers, I was woken by a big whack in the face. I jerked open my eyes and looked around me. The fire was burning very low, and the red-skins were stretched out on their backs all round, asleep. I could just move my head, but I couldn't stir a hand or foot. There was a few hailstones falling now and then, and I s'pose one of 'em must have hit me in the face. I tried to go to asleep ag'in, and just as I was getting off in a doze, *slap bang* came another smack on the end of my nose. This made me mad, as I couldn't change my position, and was likely enough to get the next crack in my eye. I blinked and winked, as a feller will do when he expects to get a crack in the eye, and can't help it; but none came, and I was getting into a good nap when *kerbang* something smasbed me in the mouth, and I was just going to rip out when I heard a whisper:

"'You old lunk-head, don't you know nothing?'

"That was Tom's voice as sure as preachin'. You'd better believe I was surprised and pleased. I know'd enough to lay still and let him work.

"'Don't you stir, or I'll smash you!' he whispered ag'in in a minute, and in half a minute the cords were cut. I stood on my feet, and the next moment we were out in the woods.

"It seems that Tom had been captured by the red-skins, as I had imagined, on the same morning; had staid with them a week or two, then give 'em the slip and followed me till he got a good chance to help me out. Now, Murtel, my yarn is finished, and do you believe it?"

"Not a word of it."

"Nor I either; if it was true, you wouldn't dare dispute me in that way."

CHAPTER II.

AN ADVENTURE.

As Harmer and Murtel lay in the grass during this charming summer weather, they indulged in many a dispute regarding the prowess of their respective nationalities.

Harry, from his lack of knowledge in history, would frequently confound men and events most sadly, and here his antagonist possessed a decided advantage over him. When he would place Washington present at some battle where he was not, Murtel would laugh in exultation at his error, and then set him right; so again, when he would confound the Brandywine with Bunker Hill, or Trenton with Lexington, his adversary would seize and turn it to his purpose in rendering the Kentuckian worse bewildered. This would eventually drive Harry to shelter, when, like the brave old Jackson, he would take position behind the cotton bags and fire at Murtel a bit of history that came under his own special notice.

"We made your fellers hop des'rately lively at New Orleans, *anyhow!*" he would exclaim.

They were engaged in such a controversy at the present moment, and when Harry had fired off his reserved battery at Ned, the other bade him be quiet—that a brace of beaver were coming down the stream.

"Let 'em cum," replied he; "mebbe tha'll be like the British, tha'll wish they hadn't."

"If you don't cease your gabbling," said Murtel, "they will be off."

"Thar ain't no danger," confidently remarked the Kentuckian; "for that fat-headed feller is pintin' his nose after my bait—he kin get it, too, ef he likes, but then I'm arter his hide for sartain."

The two beavers cautiously swam along the shore, attracted by the scent of the bait. Presently one of them approached Harry's trap, and he broke forth into soliloquy:

"Thar is a beaver, now," says he, "what has some taste; he goes in for the republic, and it's right thar—only reach out your paw, old feller, and it'll shake you, sartin—take jest another smell and you're a-goner—hide, fat and tallow."

"Will you keep quiet?" petulantly interrogated the Englishman. "Your noise will certainly frighten them off."

"Click" went Harry's trap at that moment, fastening the largest in its gripe and driving away the other.

"I knew you would frighten that one off," said Murtel.

"No I didn't frighten that one off," retorted Harry, "for thar he is, jest whar the Americans used to grab the British lion, by the paw."

"Rightfully," said Murtel, "that beaver belongs to me. Had it not been for your noise I would have certainly captured one of them."

"I never see'd an Englishman what hadn't an excuse," said Harry, continuing his taunting manner. "Ef the boys of this country hadn't allays been in the way of the British with thar rifles, they would hav captur'd the country for sart'in."

Goaded by the taunts of his companion, Murtel sprung over the bank, exclaiming that he would have it at all hazards.

"I think I see you gittin' it!" cries Harry, as in an instant he followed Ned over the bank.

The beaver, on seeing them approach, set up a beseeching cry, which sounded almost human, it was so piteous; but, unmindful of its supplication, Murtel killed it, and, snatching the body from the trap, stood ready to defend his prey.

"Drop it!" said the Kentuckian, jerking his knife from his belt.

Ned cast it behind him, and drawing his own weapon, signified to his companion to take it if he could. A conflict of a deadly nature, for the first time, was upon the eve of commencement between the two trappers; but as they nervously grasped their weapons, fiercely watching each other's movements, and approached to strike, fifty Indians, dressed and painted for war, leaped with a shout from beneath the overhanging foliage. One of the savages seized the subject of quarrel, and with Indian expertness took off the skin and suspended it from his belt.

"I predicate we mout as well postpone our little difficulty," said Harry, "fur here's a chunk of a fight better wuth takin' a hand in."

"You are not mad enough to think of fighting this band," exclaimed Ned, as he and the Kentuckian stood back to back, eying the circle of their foes, which gradually, accompanied with threatening gestures, narrowed around them.

"They ar' goin' to wipe us out, anyhow," replied Harry, "and my ha'r is wuth fightin' for, if it is wuth anythin'."

"No, no!" exclaimed Murtel; "let us surrender and trust to fortune—fear not, we will find means of escape from them."

This resolution taken, Murtel threw down his knife, and Harry, with a foreboding feeling of ill, followed his example. The Indians, observing this movement of surrender, closed around them, and soon the trappers underwent a thorough search. This ordeal through with, their arms and traps were taken, and the whole party immediately after moved westward.

The prisoners soon discovered the Indians who had captured them were an Arapahoe

war-party, who had descended the Kansas in pursuit of the Pawnees. The latter tribe, in a recent foray into the Arapahoe hunting-ground, had slain two of their young men, and they were thirsting to avenge their fall. Their village was situated many miles distant, upon the Kiowa, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and thitherward they led their prisoners. While portions of the braves hunted for the subsistence of the party, the remainder of them kept watchful eyes upon their charge, and no time during the long journey did a single opportunity offer which held out a reasonable hope for escape. Great rejoicing hailed their approach to the village, and as the women and children gathered around them, examining their skin, hair and features with minuteness, Harry could not restrain the expression of his opinion that—

"These *yur* heathens must intend cookin' us, fur the wimmin' are lookin' out choice bits a'ready."

"No doubt we shall have the pleasure of being present at a grand *pow-wow*," said Murtel, "and you may be thanked for the invitation—the fuss you made about a beaver has thus resulted."

"Thar ain't no use chawin' that over ag'in," replied Harry; "we wur both to blame, and now it would be a cussed sight better to hunt sum way of gittin' out, than growl about how we got into the scrape. Judgin' from the distance we hev cum, it must be about two thousand miles frum the Kansas."

"We have been a month performing the journey," said Murtel, "and judging from appearances, we are in possession of the wildest kind of savages."

"Parfect devils!" ejaculated his companion.

"They jabber nothin' but Ingin, and they keep an eye skinned on us all the time."

"Be patient," said Murtel, "some chance will yet offer for our escape."

"I'd like to see it comin' along," growled the Kentuckian.

The Indians conducted them to one of the principal lodges, where they were assigned mats to rest upon. It was a huge cone-like tent, thirty feet high, covered entirely with buffalo-robés. A fire burned in the center, beneath a large caldron, and the smoke curling upward found vent through an opening in the apex of the lodge. A withered looking squaw was the presiding deity at this altar, and as they entered, she ceased from her labor of feeding the fire to survey the persons of the captured white men.

"I say, Ned," said Harry, calling the attention of his companion, "thar' is our cook—ain't she a beauty? The old woman is lookin' to see if we are in good condition for cookin'."

"How can you jest on such a horrible subject," replied Murtel, shuddering. "The old hag grins at us like some fury."

"Old woman, you're a *beauty*—you ar'," said Harry, whispering in the ear of the crone.

She opened her mouth, pleased with the familiarity, and chuckling in a horrid attempt at a laugh, murmured an unintelligible response through her decayed teeth. Having thrown themselves upon their pallets, the prisoners quietly watched the preparations making for supper. As they thus reclined, numbers of the tribe, both male and female, entered to survey them. Among this crowd of gazers were two sisters, who looked upon Harry and his companion with more than a feeling of idle curiosity—their countenances betrayed a pleased interest. They were graceful in form, clad in taste, and their dark hair, confined by a bead band, hung flowing like a mantle over their brown shoulders. Beneath the light deer-skin robes beat sympathetic hearts, and, urged by pity, they gazed intently upon the prostrate forms of the two trappers; at length Harry noticed them, and turning to his desponding companion, he exclaimed:

"I'll sw'ar you're in luck."

"If I am, I should like to see it," answered Murtel, mournfully.

"Well, look thar and see that Ingin gal, how

she is eyein' on you! Ef I'm any judge, she's one of the 'first families,' as they say in old Virgin'y, and ef you kin git the soft side on her we'll git out'n this fix—sartin."

"The one beside her is staring as fixedly at you," replied Murtel.

"Ef she kin see anythin' handsome in me I'm agreeable," says Harry, "and here goes to improve first impressions."

Following up this expressed purpose, Harry winked at the youngest one of the girls, upon which she, smiling, hid her face behind her sister. The Englishman, improving the opportunity, kissed his hand to the eldest, and she, her eyes sparkling with pleasure, turned to the other, whispered something in her ear, and both immediately disappeared.

"Thar, I know'd you'd frighten 'em!" exclaimed the Kentuckian; "why in thunder did you sign fur 'em to cl'ar out?"

"I saw a light in the tallest one's eye not to be mistaken," cried Murtel; "it spoke compassion and pity, which are akin to love, and that simple motion of mine has called these better impulses into activity."

"I should like desp'rare well to know, then," said Harry, "what my *wink* has done with the youngest."

"Kindled a fire in the dusky maiden's heart," was his companion's answer.

"I ain't done nothin' so savage," replied he, "and, ef you please, don't talk no more about that *element*; it's so cussed near that it's gittin' to be a warm subject."

"It's a horrid one," says Ned, "but we will think no more of it, let us rather think of escape."

"I'm agreed to think of anythin' that's pleasin'," answered Harry, mournfully. "Let us think of that old *cook*."

CHAPTER III.

CAPTIVITY.

MURTEL turned from his reckless companion with a shudder at his untimely jests. The evening meal was now announced ready by the old crone, and straight the Indians belonging to the lodge gathered around the smoking contents of the caldron. Each dipping a portion into wooden plates, retired to their mats, and with a voraciousness equal to the animals that roamed wildly around them, they devoured the food. The prisoners, with the rest, had a share allotted to them, and the composition of the stew immediately became a subject of discussion between them. While Murtel contended it was buffalo, Harry avowed it was young *dog* and to prove his assertion, fished in the dish until he drew up the paw of a six months old. Here Murtel gave up the point and his dish at the same time.

Harry was too old a trapper to flinch at such a discovery; on the contrary, he quietly finished his meal and rolled over on his mat to sleep.

Two of the Indians now placed long withes across the bodies of the trappers, and laying their mats upon either end, bestowed themselves upon them as guards; others lay across the entrance, while the regular tenants of the lodge, male and female, ranged themselves upon rude hammocks, tied to the lodge poles which supported the structure.

All but the prisoners were soon wrapped in sleep. Hope had whispered in their hearts that the Indian maids would in some way release them; how, they had not the least idea, but they long and anxiously watched for some sign from them. Murtel persuaded himself that they would cut an opening through the side of the lodge, and severing the withes across them, conduct them forth to liberty.

Filled with this wild fantasy, he fixed his eyes upon a spot in their shelter and watched it until his eye and brain had fashioned it into a countenance, which he expected to see move but which held its place until the wearied trapper's eyelids shut it out from the troubled mind. Sleep, blessed sleep, painted to him in dreams a scene far distant, amid the haunts of civilization, where

taste had trained the beautiful productions of nature, and human refinement, in unrestrained enjoyment, presided over the scene.

Morning was shining through the opening of the lodge long before the trappers awoke. Their guards had disappeared, and an air of busy preparation appeared to pervade the lodge.

The old squaw, who presided over the iron pot in the center of the lodge, was at her task. An old petticoat of deerskin covered her withered form, to which were attached the remnants of former ornaments; her leggins were of the same material, and around over her left shoulder hung a dirty worn piece of buffalo robe, which was fastened beneath her right arm, leaving it free for the labor she was engaged in. Her matted gray hair hung around a face seared by time, and dark almost as the African in color. As she stirred the caldron, amid the smoke of a wild sage fire it required no stretch of the imagination to compare her to one of the weird sisters, who, in past times, had tempted the "Thane of Cawdor" to his undoing.

A more pleasing picture presented itself on the side of the lodge, opposite the entrance. A young chief lay in his hammock, sporting with his young child, while the mother, delighted with the happy crowing of the young Arapahoe, was busied in ornamenting her husband's head. The chief rehearsed to his child the great deeds he expected him to perform, the many horses he must steal from the Pawnees ere he would prove his title as a *brave*, and the scalps he must take from the Sioux ere the chief would admit him to council. As he thus poured out the first lessons of savage life to his child the older members of the tribe were preparing to enact one of those scenes of barbarian cruelty, so characteristic of uncivilized human nature. The toilet being ended, the morning repast served, and a similar scene transpired to the one of the previous evening. Harry still insisted on retaining his first impressions in relation to their dish, and Ned's stomach, strengthened by hunger, was better able in every way to discuss the subject. The feast being ended, a grave council of chiefs assembled within the lodge to decide the fate of the prisoners. Speeches were made upon the occasion, but those most interested in their purport were unable to distinguish a word; they were, therefore, forced to make up their conclusions from the signs alone.

A dark old chief spoke first. His head was silvered with age, and, besides many other ornaments which decorated his person, he wore a string of scalps, which told too plainly that he had figured in many a sanguinary fray. He addressed the audience in slow and measured terms, frequently motioning toward the prisoners with his clinched fist, as if in rage, which movement was always accompanied with angry gesticulations.

"That old red-skin is spreadin' out particular jesse ag'in us," said Harry, "and ef they foller his advice, we're signed for sartin. I wish I had only one sight at that head-kiverin' of his, I speculate I'd silence his clapper—my shootin' iron 'ud whistle him a leetle wuss tune than his Ingin jabber."

"Hush!" said his companion, "they possibly may understand you."

"Well, if they kin," said he, "they jest know my mind, and I'd like to hev a chance of showin' them that I mean what I say. Thar's a young Ingin," he added, "goin' to put in his oar and paddle out suthin' of thar lingo—he looks kind o' tender, and mebbe he'll help us out."

The Indian referred to spoke low, without gesticulation, and with his eyes fixed upon the earth.

"Why don't he spread himself?" said Harry, impatiently. "What's the use on his bein' mealy-mouthed?"

He little imagined that the speaker he was so interested in was, by his words, sealing their doom. The old chief had plead for their lives, and proposed incorporating them in the

tribe, but the younger members overruled him. Two of their companions had fallen by the hands of the Pawnees, and they demanded the sacrifice of the strangers to appease the spirits of their departed companions. The young, unimpassioned speaker rehearsed the virtues of the departed braves, their skill in war, and their activity in the chase, until he had vividly recalled them to the remembrance of all present, and then he mentioned the fact that while they were upon the war-path in search of the foe, the Great Spirit had guided them to where the white men were, and gave them up as a sacrifice for the departed. When he had ceased the council rose—the sentence of the prisoners had been spoken; they were condemned to torture and death at the stake!

As the Indians proceeded to bind the prisoners, Harry coolly remarked:

"I know'd that old feller was fixin' our business."

"Oh, if I could only catch another glimpse of those Indian maids," said Murtel, despondingly.

"Thar you did a nice trick!" said Harry; "ef you hadn't signed to 'em to cl'ar out I'd a' winked that young Ingin gal into a high state of tenderness."

"You mistake," answered Murtel; "I kissed my hand to her—a token of respect and love which every woman understands."

"Thar's where you missed it," replied Harry, "by comin' your high teches with an Ingin; the creatur's don't understand 'em; but any female, from a Governor's daughter to a she-bear, knows what a wink means, and when you give 'em that sign they are there. Through the universal yearth it means tender feelin's."

At that moment a shout of savage exultation arose on the outside of the lodge.

"What can that mean?" inquired Murtel.

"It only means these red dogs are ready to begin cookin'," replied his companion. "How'd you like to be served up, Ned? griddled or in a soup, like that canine game we were feasted on?"

"For Heaven's sake, hush!" exclaimed Ned. "You are as ruthless as the savages with your torture."

The two Indian girls entered the lodge again for a few moments, and the eldest having made a sign to the captives, they again withdrew. Murtel whispered to his companion that there was yet hope.

"In course thar is," replied Harry. "I jest hev had another wink at that young she Ingin."

Soon the dance of death commenced on the outside, and the savage yells of exultation echoed through the village. Circling the lodge with a ring of painted braves, they howled the song of sacrifice in the ears of their victims, and this being taken up by the Indian women, old men and children of the tribe, the demoniac orgie became sufficiently horrible in sound to strike terror to the boldest hearts. Murtel held his breath and listened in awe to the savage revels. Not so Harry—he growled and grumbled, and shouted until he worked himself into a state of excitement corresponding with the savage tumult without.

"Oh, yell away thar, you painted devils, sing it out; keep up your thunderin' fuss! You have caught two poor white fellers, about fifty on you, and in course you are brave; well, you are! Squeal and kick, perhaps I'll kick the feller's ribs who tuck the temptin' morsel."

At the close of the shout a dozen braves leaped into the lodge, seized the prisoners and brought them forth. A sight now greeted their eyes which sent the warm blood back with a sickening chill to their hearts. Before them stood the place of sacrifice, surrounded with all the paraphernalia of savage torture. Another and another shout greeted their appearance. The young Arapahoes could scarcely be restrained from using their knives, in savage sport, upon the bound trappers. The old men jabbered their delight at the approaching spectacle—their filmy eyes grew bright with the excitement. The Indian women, like fiends,

aided in the dread preparations, and cheered on their labors with jest and jeers, mingled with cruel laughter. The prisoners were rapidly bound to the stake, and several flew to obtain torches to fire their funeral pyre.

At the moment the foremost, in hot haste, approached to consummate the dread tragedy, Yana and Kouna, the two Indian girls, burst through the surrounding throng and enveloping the prisoners in their robes, claimed them as their captives. It was well known to the whole tribe that the braves destroyed by the Pawnees were the lovers of the two Indian girls, and although they yelled with madness at this interposition, all knew that the right to claim them was indisputable—the maidens alone had the power to save.

Some of the captors, in their savage rage at being thus foiled, were disposed to rush upon the bound captives and dispatch them with their knives, but they were restrained by the more prudent, who knew that such a movement would produce hostility among their own people. The controversy of right was ended in a moment by the old chief, who had addressed the council, pronouncing the prisoners the property of the Indian sisters. Those who anticipated the excitement of the torture and death were grievously disappointed, but they only gave vent to their rage in low murmurs—they dare not dispute the irrevocable law of custom. Looking hatred from their eyes, they moved slowly away from the place of execution, and hid their persons and gave vent to their feelings beneath the shadow of their own lodges.

"Thank God, we are saved!" cried Murtel, "but for what purpose, Heaven only knows."

"And I don't care," chimed in Harry, "I'm perfectly satisfied to git cl'ar of the roastin'; they can't come anythin' much wuss. You brown beauty," he continued, smoothing Kouna's dark hair down with his hands, and accompanying the motion with a kiss, "I'm jist herearter your everlastin' devoted."

Kouna laughed. She did not understand the words, but what maiden could have mistaken the trapper's meaning. Murtel and Harry were forthwith conducted to Kouna's lodge, where a marriage feast was at once prepared, and that same night, according to the customs of the tribe, Yana, the "Swan," was united to Edward Murtel, the Englishman, and Harry Harmer took to his arms Kouna, the Arapahoe "Dove."

CHAPTER IV.

A CHIVALRIC APAPAHOE.

SHORTLY after the advent of Murtel and Harmer among the Arapahoes, the tribe lost one of their most renowned chiefs at the hands of their enemies, the Pawnees. So daring and distinguished was he, that the whole tribe mourned him with the most dismal lamentations for several days, and his memory will long be held in reverence by his grateful people.

Che-wa-tuck was about fifty years of age at the time of his death—iron-limbed, muscular, active, powerful, the very personification of a true Indian warrior, and one whose name had long been a terror to the Pawnees. Between this tribe and the Arapahoes had long existed an implacable enmity. When their hunting hounds encountered on the prairies, they turned their attention from the buffalo, and fought each other with the most deadly fury. If a Pawnee found a number of his warriors lying scalped and stark on the plain, he was certain they were victims of the Arapahoes, while the braves of the latter were full as frequently the victims of the prowess of the Pawnees.

Che-wa-tuck, when scarcely more than a boy, rendered himself famous by an exploit against the Pawnees that would have made an older warrior celebrated. He and a brother were hunting in the lower portion of Kansas, when they were discovered by a party of four Pawnees, who came out from a grove of

timber within a hundred yards of them. They discharged their rifles, and Che-wa-tuck's brother fell dead, and he was wounded, but he was mounted on a mustang of most extraordinary speed, and before they could reload their rifles he was carried beyond danger. There being no possibility of overtaking him, the Pawnees drew rein and turned at a deliberate trot toward their own country, feeling assured that the young Arapahoe would be very sure to give them a wide berth forever after. But they mistook the character of Che-wa-tuck. With an Indian, one of the most sacred duties is that of avenging a fallen warrior, and the young chief resolved that these murderers should pay for the death of his brother. Mounted, as he was, upon the fleetest and most trustworthy of mustangs, he had no fear of being captured by any band of wandering Pawnees that ever roamed over the prairies, while his soul was burning with a desire to mete out retribution to the assassins, and of giving the Pawnees a lesson as to what an avenging Arapahoe warrior was capable of performing.

When the Pawnees had faded out in the distance, Che-wa-tuck wheeled his mustang about, and taking up their trail, began the pursuit. He was at an easy gallop, and just as the sun was setting, he caught the smoke of their camp-fire in a hollow about half a mile distant. Circling around so as to approach them unobserved, he rode up within a hundred yards—near enough to afford him a fair view of his enemies, and, raising his rifle, he shot one dead. Then, with a defiant whoop, he dashed out upon the prairie and speedily disappeared in the darkness. Six hours later, at the dead hour of midnight, he again entered the grove, crawling so stealthily forward that the trained ears of the apprehensive Pawnees did not detect his approach. Another explosive crack of his rifle, and only two enemies were left.

In the morning, from a neighboring hill, Che-wa-tuck discovered these two hurrying across the prairie toward their own house. He hovered around them until nightfall, in the expectation that they would kindle their campfire and afford him a chance of picking off either one or both of them, as upon the night before; but they had been too thoroughly alarmed, and when it grew dark he lost all trace of them.

Che-wa-tuck spent the entire night in stealing from grove to grove, and scrutinizing every spot where he thought it likely they had encamped; but he discovered nothing of them until the crack of a rifle and the whizz of a bullet by his face showed that they had discovered him. He quickly withdrew beyond danger, but he saw no more of the Pawnees for that night.

In the morning he found that they had continued their flight, and were at a considerable distance from him. He took their trail as before, and followed it with all the dogged persistency of the bloodhound. They were now approaching the Pawnee country, and he was in imminent danger of encountering a band of his enemies at any moment. The utmost circumspection and skill were required upon his part to avoid running into peril from which there was no withdrawal. While riding along, about noon, the identical Pawnees of whom he was in search came out from a small copse of timber. The meeting was a surprise to both parties; yet Che-wa-tuck recovered spirit, and with his unerring rifle tumbled one of them from his horse; then lying flat on the back of his own animal, he plunged away, and was soon a half-mile distant on the prairie.

The tragedy now became of intense interest. Here was a young Arapahoe chief who had slain three Pawnee warriors, and had chased the remaining one down to his own country, thus running into the most imminent danger himself for the purpose of wreaking full vengeance upon his enemies. All through this day the two Indians maneuvered against each other. The Pawnee was thoroughly aroused and alarmed, and Che-wa-tuck could not take him unawares. They exchanged shots

a dozen times during the day, but neither was so much as wounded, and at nightfall it looked as though the Aparahoe was in more danger than his adversary.

Just as it was growing dusk, a party of Pawnees appeared, and in a short time absorbed their terrified comrade into their midst. He acquainted them with the exploits of this young Arapahoe, whom several of their warriors recognized as Che-wa-tuck. The band, numbering in the aggregate over fifty, instantly separated so as to cut off escape, and started in pursuit. The Arapahoe wheeled about and faced them all. Then, with a defiant yell, he turned and galloped away. His mustang, although he has been traveling all day, did not fail him. He carried his rider over the prairie with the speed of the wind, and when morning dawned he was far beyond all danger from his pursuers. The following day he reached his own people, where at once he assumed the position of leading warrior, which it may be said he held without a rival up to the day of his death.

Shortly after the advent of Murtel and Harmer among the Arapahoes, a large portion of the tribe departed for a grand hunt, taking their squaws with them, as was the custom among the Indians. They pitched their lodges upon the plains near the Loup Fork, and began the work of hunting and slaughtering their prey. They remained undisturbed for some time, when, one morning a young warrior, who had ridden out toward a range of hills, returned with the startling announcement that a numerous and powerful band of Pawnees were encamped at the bottom of a sequestered vale.

This could mean but one thing, and Che-wa-tuck ordered his people to pack immediately and take a straight line and proceed with all possible speed for home. They were in danger of being exterminated, as the Pawnees far outnumbered them, and were better mounted, and on the war-path. Che-wa-tuck's plan was that his people should make all possible speed for home, while he remained behind, and by means of false camp-fires, should delude them until his tribe had time to get beyond all danger of pursuit.

Day was just breaking, and the Arapahoes almost immediately got under way, but they were not a moment too soon; for scarcely had they got beyond immediate observation, when a party of Pawnees made their appearance and discovered the place of the Arapahoe encampment. They galloped up to it, dismounted, made a minute examination of the place, and discovered by infallible signs that a party of their deadly enemies had encamped there. This was joyous information, and they hurried back to notify the chief, that he might send a large enough force to pursue and destroy them.

Che-wa-tuck from his hiding-place, saw these movements and understood their meaning. He understood that the safety of the entire party was now in his hands. Mounting his mustang, he galloped away at full speed, taking a course at right angles to the one his tribe had pursued, and reaching an eminence some six or eight miles distant, he kindled a fire where he knew it would be likely to attract the attention of the Pawnees.

The smoke had scarcely risen on the morning air, when a powerful band of Pawnees reached the place of their recent encampment, and without stopping to distinguish the trail, started for the fire, whose smoke they saw rising from the distant hill, and where they confidently anticipated their enemies would fall an easy prey to their merciless rapacity. But the wily Che-wa-tuck was well prepared. Waiting only long enough to insure himself that his fire would burn, and that it had misled the Pawnees, he remounted his steed and sped away to another eminence some eight or ten miles distant, where he instantly started another fire, the smoke of which was ascending through the tree-tops by the time the Pawnees had reached the first. This seemed

to bewilder the pursuing party, and for a time they were at a loss to understand what it all meant. They dismounted and began an examination of the ground to see whether they could reach any explanation in this way. Che-wa-tuck, with characteristic foresight, had anticipated this very bewilderment, followed by the attempts to unravel it, and he had trotted and walked his mustang about the fire until it bore the appearance of having been surrounded by a dozen horsemen at the very least. This led the Pawnees to believe that a small party had remained behind, kindled the fire, and then gone on to join the main body, that would be found at no great distance. Looking over the prairie, the smoke of the newly kindled fire caught their gaze, and confirmed them in this theory. With renewed ardor the entire party thundered away in the direction of the fire, and with shouts and yells dashed into the grove, certain that they had come upon their prey at last.

To their chagrin, they found a camp-fire burning precisely as in the former two instances, while it was surrounded by exactly the same kind of footsteps.

By this time their suspicions were awakened. Their repeated disappointments looked very much as if some ingenious trick had been played upon them. A more thorough examination than before was made. Fully twenty Pawnees dismounted and spent a half-hour in examining not only the ground that immediately surrounded the fire, but further out upon the prairie. The result of this examination was a complete foundation of the ruse by which they had been deceived. A single horseman had kindled each of the fires, to divert the attention of the Pawnees, while the main body of the Arapahoes were making all haste out of the country. It was with no little chagrin that they made this discovery, but with the characteristic disposition of their race, they set about repairing the mistake immediately.

The face of Che-wa-tuck lit up with a grim smile, as from the distance he witnessed and understood the movements of his enemies. Their only chance of getting upon the trail of his people was by returning to their original camping-ground, twenty miles distant, and there take up the trail for themselves. This could not be done before nightfall, when the trail would have to be abandoned until the next morning, by which time his people would be safe.

Che-wa-tuck had saved his friends, and his proud heart swelled at the thought, but he himself was in great danger, and his personal safety demanded immediate attention. His only chance lay in immediate flight in a straight direction toward home, and accordingly he started as fast as his wearied animal could carry him. In the mean time, the Pawnees had divided into smaller bands, the largest of which was to return and pursue the Arapahoes, while the others were to do their utmost toward capturing the one who had so ingeniously misled them. They knew he must be an Arapahoe from the exploit itself, and that he would either go on and kindle another fire, with the intention of misleading them still further, or else start for his nation in a straight line.

Che-wa-tuck traveled the entire night, resting his mustang as much as possible; but, when morning dawned, to his amazement, he discovered that the party of Pawnees were in sight, and with a loud yell they dashed after him. Comprehending that the contest was no longer one of speed, the Arapahoe, after urging his horse some distance, turned his head toward a deep ravine which he distinguished in the distance, and which was covered with trees and undergrowth that offered an inviting shelter. His noble beast that seemed to comprehend the danger of his master, carried him bravely forward, and he succeeded in reaching it.

Just as he was entering its verge he came directly upon an Indian girl, who was dipping

water from a spring. Che-wa-tuck called to her in the Pawnee tongue, when she looked up in great trepidation. Before she could scream for help he said:

"You are in no danger; it is I."

"What is the matter?" she asked, all her feelings merging into the single one of pity.

"I am pursued by twenty Pawnees, who are seeking my life."

"Are they near at hand?"

"So close that if I stand here two minutes longer I am lost."

"Dismount and go to that bower yonder, while I mislead your pursuers."

The Arapahoe instantly obeyed her, and reaching the bower which she had pointed out to him, nestled down in safety, while the noble young woman, springing upon the mustang, rode at full gallop through the bushes, taking a winding course, and leaving such a palpable trail behind that the pursuers despaired it immediately.

A moment later, the Pawnees thundered into the ravine, and observing the trail, dashed pell-mell after it, confident that the next moment they would be upon the reckless chief, whose every hope of escape was now cut off.

The girl, with a sympathy that was as creditable as her skill and foresight were remarkable, after riding the mustang through the bushes for some distance, entered the stream that ran through its center, and following its descending course some rods, making the horse touch its sides and leaving footprints that could not fail to be seen. She then took the middle of the stream, turned the horse's head about and passed above the place where she had entered the bower where the fugitive had concealed himself. By this means she avoided leaving the slightest clew to the course she had taken, and the Pawnees were most effectually thrown off the scent.

"Now," said she, in a whisper, "they do not know where to look for you; they will hunt through the ravine for hours without finding you. Mount your horse instantly, and make the best time you can while they are blind."

This was good advice, and Che-wa-tuck acted upon it. Thanking the girl for the inestimable service she had rendered him, he was on the back of his steed immediately, and making the best time possible home. Mile after mile was past, and as he cast his eyes back he saw nothing of his pursuers. He had indeed eluded them, and he reined his horse down to a walk, for the poor animal sorely needed it. For over twenty-four hours he had gallantly borne his master, and great as was his endurance he now needed rest. He had walked less than a hundred yards, when, to his inexpressible horror, as he reached the top of a hill, he saw full fifty Pawnees coming up toward him. They were a portion of the party returning from the unsuccessful pursuit of the Arapahoes. Che-wa-tuck changed the direction of his horse and attempted to escape, but the animal was too exhausted to carry him with sufficient speed. With ear-splitting yells, the entire party spread out like a fan and dashed after him. As the foremost approached, Che-wa-tuck turned and sent a bullet through his brain. Then, loading as his horse continued his gallop, he speedily turned and tumbled another to the ground. Another and another followed, until six lay scattered along the prairie.

As he was reloading again, his own exhausted mustang stumbled and fell, and ere he could recover from the shock, the band rushed upon him. He was shot with bullets and arrows, and gashed with tomahawks and pierced with lances, notwithstanding all which he arose amidst his foes, and with his clubbed rifle and his hunting-knife he stretched around him five prostrate bodies, and fell with his back upon their corpses, still fighting. He was scalped, and hundreds of warriors held a dance over him.

But we have left Harmer and Murtel too long alone, and we must now give them our attention.

CHAPTER V.

A TRAGEDY.

ON the next day the trappers' weapons were returned to them, and they were fully incorporated in the tribe. Murtel, because of his heavy dark beard, was named Yahoos, "Black Bear," and Harry's freckles won for him the title of Hawasa, or "Spotted Wolf." In a few days a hunting party was fitted out in the tribe, and the trappers resolved to accompany it. Harry, in his own mind, resolved to win the confidence and friendship of the tribe, but his companion from the first meditated escape. He turned from the proffered hand of poor Yana with loathing and disgust, nor would he consent to look upon her in any other light than as a spy set upon his actions, for the purpose of holding him in a lifetime bondage. The poor girl loved him, with all the devotion her rude nature was capable of, and she would have died to serve him. The tribe permitted them to go out in their hunting excursion, but they watched them with unceasing vigilance, and never permitted them to wander out of sight. Having taken them captives, they feared that if permitted to escape, the white men would lead their brethren to their village and wreak vengeance upon them. No trader had ever yet ventured so high in the mountains. They, therefore, had nothing to hope for in the way of escape through that source, and the hostility of the Arapahoes with other tribes around them precluding the hope of conveying information to their friends through them, they were consequently forced to submit to their present bondage.

In due course of time, Murtel became the father of a fine boy, and the sight of the child caused the father to bestow more tenderness toward the mother—she, poor fond one—hailing the infant as a harbinger of her husband's returning love, called him Kaam, or, "Day-light," whose coming had dispelled her night of grief. Harry was unblessed in his wedded love, but he was nevertheless kind to Kouna, and the ear of the young Indian wife became keen when his footsteps approached, and her eye sparkled with pleasure at his coming.

The surveillance of the tribe over their prisoners had gradually relaxed, when an encounter occurred between them and a small party of Pawnees, during which the Kentuckian won their entire confidence by his bravery and daring. He saved the principal chief when he was in imminent danger, and captured the scalp of the Pawnee who was in the act of killing him. After this proof of devotion and courage, confidence was established between the captives and the Arapahoes, and the former strode now, unwatched and unsuspected, wherever their inclination led them. Murtel's hope of escape revived, and with it coldness and neglect of Yana—he began at length to hate her because her aching heart prompted her to increase her watchful attention to him. He breathed to Harry his hopes of escape, and pointed out the hopeless and life-length bondage before them, if they made no effort to free themselves. The Kentuckian had begun to love his Indian wife, but he could not consent to give up all thoughts of civilization and of home. The far off land grew fair in his eyes, because it was shut out by distance, and the turbid waters of the Mississippi, in his imagination, were far more beautiful than the clear ripples of the mountain streams which coursed by their village. It was after much persuasion, though, that he consented, and the day was fixed. Yana had learned enough English to distinguish that her husband was speaking of his distant home, and coupling this with the dislike he had recently manifested for her, her suspicions became aroused—she became satisfied that it was his purpose to desert her. The trappers gave out that it was their intentions to hunt for beavers in the small streams near Pike's Peak, and prepared themselves accordingly for a long absence, but their movements did not escape the watchful eye of Yana—she, too, prepared for a march.

When the morning fixed for their depar-

ture came, she raised young Kaam, placed him upon her husband's pack, and prepared to follow. Her husband told her they intended to go alone. She begged to accompany him, but he sullenly refused her, and crouching, in dread of his anger, upon a mat, she pressed her child in convulsive grief to her bosom, as if with his infant form she could stay the throbbing of her wounded heart. The trappers departed, and the unsuspecting Kouna, with beaming eyes, gazed after Harry until his form had disappeared in the distance. When they were gone, Yana revealed her suspicions to her sister, and although she was at first incredulous, doubt broke in upon her love, and she was almost frantic. Her first impulse was to fly upon her husband's track, but in this her sister restrained her, who, advising that they be permitted to go alone, mentioned at the same time her intention of meeting them on the route. Kouna resigned herself to her sister's guidance.

When the trappers had obtained sufficient start, Yana and her sister followed. Tracing their husbands' footprints, they found them directed toward Vermilion Creek, on the direct route to the Peak, but in the course of a few hours' travel their track inclined southeast in the direction of "Fontaine qui Bout," and thither by a direct route did the Indian wives at once bend their footsteps. Yana knew that Murtel and Harry had been with the tribe hunting upon this stream, and that in following it to the mouth they had seen the Arkansas. The size of the latter would at once assure the minds of the captives that it was one of the main streams and the Indian wife rightly judged that the fugitives would choose this route for their flight.

Two days after their departure, the Indian women arrived at a point on the above mentioned stream, where Yana knew Murtel and Harry must pass, and finding no traces of their footsteps indicating that they had done so, she resolved to halt and wait their coming. They forthwith set about erecting a rude hut for a shelter. Bending the tops of several saplings together, they bound them and interlaced them with boughs. While they were engaged in their labor, they descried their husbands on the face of the distant butte, or lofty promontory. The quick eye of the trappers in a moment perceived the hut, and their first impulse was to retreat, but a sign from Yana arrested their footsteps.

Thinking it probable that a Cheyenne hunting party had encamped there, with which tribe the Arapahoes were on friendly terms, they decided to approach and learn further intelligence of the route they were pursuing. After a cautious reconnoiter, they could discover the forms of two females, and their being alone was cause for suspicion in the minds of the trappers—they dreaded a hostile ambuscade. At length Yana advanced to meet them, and to the surprise of Murtel and Harry they discovered that it was their Indian wives whom they had been so carefully circling. Murtel was in a rage on finding himself thus waylaid, and his companion could scarcely restrain him from committing outrage upon Yana. She bore his anger with silent patience, and would as meekly have received his chastisement—all she desired was permission to be his faithful slave. Harry laughed at Kouna, and ridiculed the idea of his deserting her until she believed it was but an idle fancy of her sister. That he denied it was sufficient for her, and his declaration that he would stop upon the very spot they had selected and hunt that stream, restored the trusting Dove to full confidence in him.

"How will we escape from these cursed spies?" interrogated Murtel, when they were alone.

"Why, to tell the truth, Ned," said Harry, "it kinder pleases me to see a gal hankerin' arter me this way, even ef she is Ingin, and I hate to be lookin' in her eyes and deceivin' her with these lyin' yarns. Bless the little brown creatur', she loves me like a human, and I'll

swar I don't much keer about runnin' away from her."

"What!" exclaimed Murtel, "are you willing to remain a slave to these savages?"

"Slave!" echoed Harry, "you must be wanderin' in your mind—I'm sartin' I ain't seen no fellers live much freer than these Ingins, 'cept trappers."

"And are you willing to bid good-by to Kentucky forever?" inquired Murtel.

"Ah, *thar* you hit me," responded Harry, "for, ef she ain't dead, my old mother's *thar*; 'sides, the old home, dad's niggers, and any quantity of fixin's that I'd like to see ag'in. I'm with you, old feller—this brown Dove of mine will hav to wait until I go and see the old woman."

Murtel grasped his hand gladly on hearing his decision. It was resolved between them that they would use every means to lull the suspicion of Yana and Kouna, and steal off from them when they were wrapt in sleep. On thus agreeing, they immediately commenced completing the rude shelter which the women had begun, and interlacing the uprights with branches of the willow, they wove over them a covering of the wild sage, which in every way made comfortable their temporary habitation. The women made couches of dried leaves, over which they spread their buffalo-robés, and soon everything about wore the air of a regular Indian encampment. Kouna's heart being filled with joy at finding Harry again, she manifested her pleasure by ornamenting the entrance to their new lodge with bouquets of wild flowers, which she placed among the branches of the fluttering willow. Night drew on apace, and while the men sat without the cabin, leaning against the side, smoking and discussing their march, the women conversed in low tones within. Kouna was fully reassured that all was right, but not so Yana—she silently wept. The women, wearied with their rapid march, soon slept. As soon as Murtel and his companion were assured of this they arose from their seats, and seeking their weapons and packs, strode away beneath the shadow of the thick forest bordering the stream. A lofty ridge some miles distant, along which lingered the rays of the departing moon, became their landmark, and thither they pursued their course, pausing at intervals as the echoes of their footsteps suggested pursuit. Ere they had reached the summit Murtel announced to his companion that he had forgotten his knife and must return. In the mountains this weapon is invaluable, and Harry readily assented to the necessity of recovering it. Murtel accordingly retraced his steps. The former held on his way to a high point, destitute of vegetation, which overhung the river. It was bare white rock, and in the moonlight the most conspicuous object in the landscape—here they agreed to meet again. Having reached the point designated, the Kentuckian laid himself down with his head over the precipice, and listened to the mournful murmur of the stream as it rumbled on its course through the narrow canon.

All below was wrapped in an impenetrable vail of darkness—the night-wind sighed through the tree-tops, and the voices of mourning spirits seemed to come up from the dark waters, while the lingering moon, with its departing rays, shaped the distant hills and the lofty trees into spirits of the vast wilderness. A sorrowful feeling stole over the heart of the lone trapper—an indefinable dread of coming evil. At this moment a light shot up from the gloom of the valley beneath. It was in the direction of their temporary shelter, and guessing that Murtel's return had awakened the women, he attributed the light to them. Having missed Murtel and himself, he supposed that they had fired the hut to light up the surrounding darkness, and disclose by their footprints the direction they had fled. The moon was now down, and the fire but for a few moments threw its glare upon the trees. Presently the last spark appeared to die out, and complete darkness enveloped the whole wild. Alone and in silence

Harry listened for the footsteps of his companion, and soon they smote upon his ear. As panting with his ascent of the hill, Murtel came alongside of his companion, the latter discovered that he was carrying something in his arms.

"What is that you are huggin' thar?" inquired he.

"It is my cub," replied the Englishman. "In the States I can easily sell him for a young negro, and the proceeds will partially remunerate me for this trip."

"You ain't certainly stole the mother's papoose," said Harry, with some surprise.

"Yes, I have," answered Murtel, bitterly; "she will never miss it, of that I am certain."

"Look, Ned," said Harry, his voice growing husky with rising passion, "it wur mean enough in us to cl'ar out, 'thout addin' to it by stealin' the mother's baby, and I consider this trick ekill to the wu'st an Ingin could do."

"Don't waste your sympathy," replied Murtel; "its mother is not likely to ever again feel much sorrow at its loss. Curse it!" he continued, as the child broke forth in a plaintive wail; "if it favors me with much of this music, I will toss it in the stream."

"Thar is somethin' more in your talk than I kin understand," said Harry. "What was the fire I jest now saw in the valley, afore you cum up?"

"It was our hut," answered his companion.

"Fired by the wimmin!" exclaimed Harry; "then they are arter us, and will never give up the chase while we hold on to that young'un."

"Ah, ha! ha!" bitterly laughed his companion. "I have prevented their dodging our footsteps further."

"How?" inquired Harry, his hands clinched with excitement.

"By passing my knife into their bodies and firing the hut," replied Murtel. "I gave them a spy's doom."

"Dog!" shouted the infuriated Kentuckian, "you deserve fifty deaths for such a wolfish act—by the mother that gi'n me life, I sw'ar you sha'n't travel with me—you are a white-hearted dog!"

"Take care what you say," replied Murtel; "self-preservation counsels us to be friends—be careful that we do not become enemies."

"That is jest what I want to be," cried the Kentuckian, "your enemy to the death! You cowardly vill'in, to go and put your mean knife into the heart of my poor Kouna; see now ef you kin keep mine out of your own. Put down that thar child, you wolf, or I'll cover it with your dirty blood!"

In an instant Harry's knife was out of its sheath. Murtel, wrapping his robe around the child, threw it into the branches of a wild sage bush, and the trappers then, with drawn knives, met here in a death-grapple, in darkness and far from the possibility of interposition.

At the first dash, Murtel plunged his knife through the Kentuckian's robe, and the latter, seizing his hand, held it there, while Harry, clinging with his other hand to Murtel's hunting-shirt, prevented him also from using his weapon. While thus struggling in the darkness, filled with deadly rage, they both forgot that they were contending on the bank of a precipice; but Murtel soon became aware of a double peril—with his right limb he in vain felt for a foothold—he was hanging over the dark chasm, and his ear could clearly distinguish the noise of the flood beneath.

The discovery made him relax his hold, and the next instant the Kentuckian drove his knife through his body. He clung with a death-gripe to Harry, endeavoring to drag him with him into the yawning abyss, but the latter, grasping a cleft in the rock, shook him off, and the heartless assassin sunk with a scream of anguish into the dark and bubbling waters.

And awful silence prevailed after the sanguinary encounter, and Harry stood like a statue amid the gloom, listening, but no further sound came up from the depths save the voice

of the troubled stream. Low in the valley the funeral pyre of his devoted and loving Kouna flashed up again, and at the thought of her kindness, her tragic end, and his own desolate and perilous situation, the rude trapper sunk down and wept tears of bitter grief. A slight wail from the bush broke his sorrowful reverie, and searching out the orphan half-breed, he folded the little "Daylight" to his bosom with a hopeful feeling, as if he thought his presence would aid to banish the night of horrors which overshadowed him. Morning soon gilded the east, and turning his head toward it he struck out for the head-waters of the Arkansas.

After many days of weary marching he fell upon the course of that stream and followed its windings. At night he would lie down upon its banks, and, twining his arm around his little charge, sleep soundly, regardless of the howl of the distant wolves. He never wearied of Kaam, and it seemed as if the child had become conscious that he was its sole surviving protector. The frequency with which he met Indian signs upon the border of the river filled his heart with dread—he was in continual apprehension of encountering some of the Arapahoe nation, who he knew would carry him back to the tribe, discover the dark deed perpetrated by Murtel, and sacrifice him as a participant.

At length his fears drove him from the valley of the Arkansas. Striking out from that stream, he inclined to the north, in hopes that he would touch some of the tributaries of "Smoky Hill Fork" of the Kansas. Here, in the vast plains lying between the Arkansas and the Nebraska, he became lost, but game was abundant, and he was an expert hunter; in this particular, therefore, he suffered least.

After wandering about for many weary days, now alarmed by Indian signs, and again startled by the fresh footprints of the grizzly bears which abound in this trackless region, he suddenly came upon the waters of the main fork mentioned, and commenced his journey down the stream. Hope now grew strong within him, and with his little companion, who thrived because he knew not of these dangers, he held on his long and tedious march. They suffered incredible hardships, but at length reached the main stream, and thence continued their way to where it empties into the broad Missouri.

At the mouth of this stream Harry met a company of traders and trappers, with many of whom he was well acquainted. They had long since given him up as dead. He related to them the adventures which himself and Murtel encountered in the Arapahoe country, altering only that portion which referred to the latter's death—of this he accused the Indians, and the child, Kaam, he claimed as his own.

CHAPTER VI.

KAAM.

THE party Harmer fell in with were, after a successful hunt, descending to St. Louis. Several Mackinaw boats, built for the trip, were in readiness, and packing their fur on board, the whole party, Harry and Kaam included, were soon on their way down the windings of the turbid Missouri. Harry was poor, but his companions were generous, and without consulting him upon the matter, apportioned out sufficient furs to bear his expenses while in the town they were journeying to, and give him another outfit for the mountains. Once more safe beneath the shadow of civilization, the trapper's naturally buoyant nature regained its tone, and he gave to the eager ears of his listening companions many glowing descriptions of the far-off Indian hunting-grounds he had journeyed through.

St. Louis kindly consented to impart to him lessons of instruction, and if his inclination tended that way, he promised the Kentuckian he would make him a pattern of learning. Harry being deficient himself in education, believed that success in this world depended mainly upon it, and he therefore resolved to do

what he considered a father's duty toward the young half-breed. Having thus bestowed him, he gave himself up for several days to the enjoyments of the town.

Pleasure soon palled with these men of the mountains—it soon lost its charm, and they naturally turned their thoughts toward the hills, where excitement never dies. A number of them at length formed a party, with Harry as their leader, and he visited the little Kaam to bid him farewell. The child appeared to fully comprehend the separation, and reaching out his little arms to the kind protector of his infancy, he wept as if his heart would break. The trapper, kissing him affectionately, left many injunctions in regard to care and kindness toward his child, as he termed him, and bidding him a long adieu, he departed to join his companions.

Time held on its course, and our young hero grew a fine, dark, intelligent stripling, but of his *father*, as he was taught to call Harmer, he received no tidings, except that now and then those he resided with obtained from returning trappers packages of rich furs, which had been deposited by him to be forwarded for his support.

The padre kept his promise—he grew to love the studious and quiet half-breed. His thirst for knowledge pleased him, and he exerted himself to gratify it; the consequence was that ere Kaam feasted his seventeenth year he had far outstripped those of corresponding age in solid acquirements. In the teachings of the priest he found histories of the old world, romances of ancient chivalry, dissertations upon art, and works of science, from all of which he conned lessons with avidity, but the romances of the early crusades made upon him the most lasting impressions. He pored over their contents until his imagination became fired with a wish to emulate the bright deeds of those iron warriors.

Strange, too, surrounded as he was with influences calculated to enlist him on the side of those who battled for the Cross, yet all his sympathies were with the Moslem. In his perusal of the old world's history, he saw but a vast panorama of oppression, treachery, ambition and bloodshed, and in the Moslem he discovered, as he deemed, a people battling against the combined upholders of these wrongs. Thus, while imbibing the Christian teaching of the good old priest, he mingled with it strange views of his own, and read lessons which, instead of tempering the hot blood of his nature, made it course with a more impulsive leap.

Kaam was handsome—he had the fine figure peculiar to the forest children of North America, and from his father he inherited the intellectual countenance of the European races; it was not strange, therefore, that the maidens of St. Louis looked upon him with a feeling of partiality. One among them, like himself, an orphan, had early touched the sympathetic cord in Kaam's heart, and he learned to love her with a passion warm as his nature.

As he grew in years, the feeling became all-absorbing. He loved her not only because she was beautiful, but because, like himself, she was alone in the world—the chivalry he had read of was aroused in his own heart, and he devoted himself to the being of his adoration.

Julia Severance thought she loved him too, at least she felt flattered by his devotion, and she always heard with pleasure her companions call the handsome Kaam her lover. She plaited her dark tresses into a bracelet and placed it around his arm; and braided his raven locks into a band for her own. The half-breed received it as a gage, and in his heart he vowed to love and protect the girl. Julia thus had lightly performed an act which gave a coloring to the whole after-life of the young Arapahoe.

The life of our hero was flowing on in an uninterrupted current, when a band of trappers arrived from the mountains. Many of them had been long absent, and among these was his adopted father, Harry Harmer. On bearing of his arrival, Kaam flew to meet him and

embrace him with joy. For the first time since his reason could comprehend the tie, he gazed upon him whom he believed to be his father. The old trapper was changed in nothing save age—his laugh was as light and loud as ever, and his stalwart form almost belied the silvery threads scattered through his hair.

He had been, since his departure, a fortunate leader in many expeditions, and now returned rich with the spoils derived from his perilous trade. Kaam conducted him to the good padre, who shaded his eyes, and gazed inquiringly upon him, but without recognition—time had dimmed his sight—but when the trapper spoke, the deep tones of his manly voice, and his manner of speech, called up recollection, and the old man grasped his hands with warm and kindly welcome. As usual on such occasions, there were great rejoicings among the friends and families of these mountain rovers—the feast and dance went on in a continued round for several days and nights.

With this band of mountain men came Murtel's son, by his first wife, who had grown up since boyhood at one of the posts. He too was handsome. To the dark eyes and lively manners of his French origin on the one side he added the manly bearing of his father's English origin on the other, and these united made him a rival of no mean pretensions in the contest for fair smiles, which followed the arrival of his party. Adolph Murtel was a gay gallant too, who knew how to sound his own fame, and among the beauties of the old frontier town were many who listened with a greedy ear when he was relating his mountain adventures.

There was a dashing, dare-devil air about this braggart which gave effect to his stories, and while the young men viewed him with mingled fear and dislike, the maidens regarded him as a hero, a brave Indian-killer, a charming mountaineer. Among the latter, we regret to say, was Julia, the beloved of Kaam. The half-breed noticed her estrangement from himself, and the interest manifested for Murtel. Adolph and he had been companions in their youthful days, and Julia had also known this rival of his when they were children. He attributed their present seeming attachment to the latter fact, and believed it would wear off when the novelty of Adolph's presence had passed away.

But not so; it seemed rather to increase, and the dashing Adolph, for the gratification of his vanity, fanned the maiden's partiality, although he knew at the same time he was kindling a fire of jealousy in the heart of her former lover. Kaam, wounded in spirit, turned from Julia to his new-found father, Harry Harmer, and they together wandered on the banks of Chouteau's Lake. The old trapper related to him many stories of the far-off hills, and he listened to the details of hair-breadth escapes until his mind was filled with exciting thought, and his heart panted to be a sharer in them.

"But, father," said Kaam, "you have never told me anything of my mother, and I long to hear of her. Oh! how often my fancy has labored to paint her image to my mind. When, perusing e'er history or romance, I have found one described as a gentle, noble dame, I have said to myself, this is like my mother."

Kaam had now broached a subject which Harmer would fain avoid, and yet he considered it his duty to tell the child of his adoption the real story of his parentage. The half-breed had no knowledge of the fact that he was the child of an Indian mother, and yet he sometimes thought it strange that distinctions had been made between himself and others; but the native pride of his superior nature never for a moment attributed it to any inferiority of station assigned to him by the world. He walked among his companions with a consciousness that in anything pertaining to manhood he was their equal, if not their superior. It was the dread of breaking down this proud feeling that the trapper shrunk from. He knew the distinctions the world made between races, and although society where he now stood

was less observant of these divisions, yet even there it existed—besides in the eye of the law, Kaam was *illegitimate*; and although, if the facts and circumstances were fully known, it would neither stain him or shame his mother's memory, it would be difficult to unravel the mystery of his birth in every corner where malice or slander could whisper that opprobrious epithet fixed upon him by law. Knowing this, and fearing that a knowledge of the facts would rouse the dark current of his nature, and plunge him in hopeless despondency or irretrievable ruin, Harmer had avoided the subject; but now Kaam would not take any denial.

"Whar's the use of wantin' to know what ain't pleasant?" Harmer said to him; "it ain't going to help things—you are *you*, and that are sufficient. A long and heart tearin' of what's past ain't a pleasant dish, boy, so don't taste it."

"Ah, but you know, father," said Kaam, "I have your *promise*."

"Yes, but a promise to do what ain't partick'larly pleasant ought to be broken," answered Harry; "but since you will have me begin this cursed ugly yarn, I'll tell you first, and I reckon you'll want me to stop—it is this, Kaam—I ain't your *father*!"

The announcement of this fact fell with astonishing effect upon Kaam's ear—he reeled under it as if stricken a blow, but instead of being content to know no father, he insisted upon hearing all—upon knowing who and what he was, and he plead and besought the old trapper until he told him. As the dread recital fell from his father's lips, the iron of despair entered into his soul, all the gay dreams of chivalry in which he had reveled, the bright plans he had sketched for the future, gilded as they were by a laudable ambition withered and perished, and passed away as he listened to the story of his childhood. It swept over his heart like a tornado of the forest, uprooting every aspiration that reared itself heavenward. Like some fair ship struck by the tempest and left of everything, he yielded his heart to the storm's billows of passion, and wept long and bitterly; nor were they tears that relaxed, but they were rather a flood which formed about him a pool of bitterness, within which his spirit laved itself in anguish. The tender-hearted trapper pitied him to his heart's core, and tried in vain to comfort him.

"I told you, Kaam, it was a sorrowful story," said he, "but you would hev it out, and jest see how it makes perfect *chitlins* of your feelin's."

"I thank you, *father*—for such you have been to me," said Kaam, bitterly, "that you slew the destroyer of my mother—he deserved a thousand deaths."

The fountain of his heart now dried up, and a moody melancholy seemed to settle upon him. He shunned the society of those who were rejoicing. Raised in civilized society, and instructed by education in its distinctions, he felt that he, the half-breed, son of a father who had been previously married, and whose wife and legal offspring still lived, held but a questionable place among those with whom he had mingled; and fancying himself, as it were, in an amphitheater, gazed upon by the assembled world, who all were possessed of his story, he shrank from the gaze of human eyes. To add to his grief, Julia began to look coldly upon him, while to Adolph Murtel she was all smiles. Julia could not refrain, during this season of festivity, from comparing the gay cheerfulness of the trapper with the moody brow of the studious half-breed, and Adolph always gained a point by the comparison. He upbraided her for her coldness toward him, and she, in turn, mocked at his gloomy brow and jealous air. To tease him, she became more familiar with Adolph, and went so far as to permit his lips to touch hers in the presence of her lover—this, of course, produced a quarrel, and she, laughing, turned from the devoted Kaam to the dashing young trapper. As the former was leaving their presence, his ear

caught an expression that turned his blood to fire:

"The half-blooded Indian," said Adolph, "has grown jealous."

The light laugh of Julia at this unfeeling remark completed Kaam's rage, and turning upon Adolph he felled him to the earth where he stood, and strode off vowing a deeper vengeance. Oh, how dark were the thoughts which now chased each other through the brain of the orphan half-breed. Like the Ishmaelite of old, he felt himself cast out, and he looked upon this Adolph as not only his rival in the love he had set his heart upon, but as the living barrier which stood between him and honorable station—a thing he had learned to prize as equal to life itself, and without which the latter was not worth possessing.

To be honorable, of pure birth, and respected parentage, was in his mind, to be born heir to the right rule, and to lack these requisites was to hold a place among the common multitude—earth's crowd—which great minds live to control, scourge when they rebel, and which they drive to toil like the cattle to the fields. The turbulent mob of the city, the rank and file of the army, or the toiling husbandman of the field were, in his estimation, alike slaves in a worse bondage than he who labors beneath a visible lash. The hidden gates of society, though but air—ay, but the breath of folly—shut out such as him from power as effectually as if they were of adamant. While bitterly ruminating on these things and forming in his mind some scheme of revenge upon his rival and the faultless Julia, he encountered Harmer, who, on learning all, soothed his tempest-tossed mind into a comparative calm.

"Don't give way to this perfect rush of bad feelin'," said Harry. "I'll tell you what we'll do, Kaam; we'll go together to the mountains, whar I'll larn you to trap, and when you've got rid of these bad feelin's you kin cum back. Julia, by that time, will be consarned glad to see you, fur she'll git tired of hevin' this juicy-headed young feller friskin' round her."

"I will gladly accompany you," answered Kaam, mournfully, "for I can no longer live here—everything here is turned to gall and bitterness. I am scorned as an outcast thing, whose love is a reproach, and whose wounded feelings are a subject for mirth. Come, let us to the wilderness, where I can hide me among its hills."

Filled with this inward grief, the young Arapahoe avoided society that he might brood over his bitter thoughts alone. The good old padre sought him out, and learning his sorrows, and his intention to fly to the mountains for relief, he tried to pour the oil of comfort upon his troubled spirit, while, at the same time, trying to dissuade him from his purpose of following the trappers.

"Seek peace within the quiet bosom of the church, my son," advised the good old priest.

Now, for the first time, did he perceive that his pious lessons had been lost upon his pupil, for he answered him:

"No! no cowl for me, holy father, my spirit can never be content within priestly robes—I am better fitted to make hearts sad than pour into their wounds the balm of consolation."

"Fast and pray, my son," said the priest, "and it will humble that rebellious spirit."

"I would rather give it way, father," answered he, "I would rather fight now than pray, and such feelings being unbecoming in a priest, it is better that I do not become one—I would bring reproach upon the sanctuary. As for fasting, in the mountains I will do that perforce, and even when I may have plenty, there will be a sorrow here within my heart that will be sure to check the appetite."

"Ah, my boy," cried the old priest, in tones of pity, "ere love for this maiden took possession of your heart, you were gentle as a dove, but this passion once aroused, your whole nature is stirred like a volcano."

The good priest little thought that the fuel which had fed this volcano was partly gathered

from the old romances in his own library. They first tuned Kaam's heart to the admiration of beauty, and it became natural that he should next seek an object for the exercise of the new and pleasurable feeling. His love for Julia became a wild, unconquerable passion—a flame which death alone could extinguish, and which threatened in its raging both to consume him and those who crossed his path. Looking upon Adolph as one of a white race, not only foe to his native people but to himself, individually, he swore to compass his ruin. The thought that his white father, whose blood ran in his own veins, had contemplated selling him into hopeless slavery, but strengthened his hate toward him as well as created a feeling of dislike to the whole system of civilization, under which such distinctions could exist, or such wrongs be perpetrated. The Indian in his nature was fully awakened. Kneeling to the old priest, he received his blessing; and then, with his adopted father, Harry Harmer, he turned his face toward the west, and sought relief for his troubled spirit amid the wild scenes of grandeur hid in the desert wastes which lay toward the Pacific.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE "FAR WEST."

AMID the wild scenery of the great Missouri, and far away from the spot where his spirit had been so humbled, Kaam began to breathe freer and deeper—its savage grandeur seized upon the enthusiasm of his nature, and his heart began to shape out a congenial home in the indistinct beyond. He talked but little, and then generally something in relation to the wild territory they were about to traverse. Having reached the mouth of the Kansas, they ascended that stream to the Fork, where a temporary trading-post had been established, and here some days were spent in preparation for a trapping tour. Harmer, although for some years previous established as commander of the post, resolved, on this occasion, to accompany Kaam on a trip, teach his inexperience how and where to set his traps, and guard him from the perils which, in that wild country, beset the adventurer.

All the necessary preparations being made, they together ascended "Smoky Hill Fork" to trap that stream and its tributaries. Every step of the way was full of deep interest to Kaam, and often, as they lay down upon the banks of the stream, looking at its rippling waters, or stood upon the edge of a prairie, bordered by the distant gigantic hills, where the perfume of wild flowers filled the air, and the rich foliage of the West fluttered in the sunbeam, the heart of the young half-breed would expand with delight. Here were no trammels of society to curb the free breathings of his soul, or force the movements of his body into the cold and formal propriety of conventional forms, yet even here he discovered he was not free. If it was necessary in the haunts of civilization to watch the tongue that it did not offend, so was it necessary to guard it in the wild, that it did not invite the encounter of a savage foe. Thus, when he would feel prompted to shout, that echo might answer back the glad note of his freedom, self-preservation counseled him to silence, and caution whispered to him dread of a lurking foe. How true it is in life, that when we fly from one evil we often rush upon another.

While they thus progressed, at times drinking the delights of nature, and again enduring most trying hardships, an incident occurred which tried the nerve of the young trapper. He was leisurely leading his mule along the verge of a perpendicular bluff, when the animal ran against the projecting branch of a dead tree and was precipitated into the stream. The occurrence was so sudden that the beast dragged Kaam in with it. He no sooner rose to the surface than, with bridle in hand, he swam for a shelving part of the shore and led his mule out. Here he unstrapped his skins, and had commenced spreading them out to dry, when he descried Harmer descending the

bank to his assistance. The old trapper, after ascertaining that he was uninjured, indulged in a hearty laugh at his pupil.

"I'll sw'ar, Kaam," he said, "I thort you wur tryin' to give me the slip so you might commence trappin' on your own hook. When you try that are feat ag'in, boy, jest don't larn it to the mule, for he's tricky enough already, darn him."

For the first time since his departure from St. Louis, Kaam indulged in a laugh, and the old trapper hailed with gladness the passing away of the cloud which had hung upon his brow.

"I will wager you the first beaver I trap, father"—he still called him by that tender name—"that you and the old black mule cannot perform thefeat half so gracefully."

"Now you stump me," says he. "I gi'n in, and promise to stand the licker at the first stoppin'-place."

"And where is that?" inquired Kaam, with eagerness.

Harmer burst into a laugh at the manner the question was put, and replied:

"It's at the Forks, and six months after this period we'll take a drink—long trust for a treat, ain't it, Kaam?"

"I thought by the manner in which you spoke we were nearing some post," said the latter.

"I speculate it's an Ingin one, then," said Harry, "and it ain't often they have anything stronger than water, up this high."

While they were thus conversing, Harmer's mule, which had been left on the top of the hill, made a dash down the bank for the river. He was trembling, and wild with fear.

"Ingins, by all that's savage!" exclaimed Harry, "and our shootin'-irons, except this ar' pistol, ar' all at the top of the bank. A bear, by jingo!" he again shouted in the same breath, as a grizzly monster came along down the hill. Instantly the affrighted mules kicked up their heels and fled along the bank.

"Mount that thar tree," said Harry to Kaam, at the same time starting himself for another.

The bear came down to where they were, and, sitting down on his haunches, looked up at them and whined as if in pain.

"How cussed sorry he is," shouted Harry, "because one of us didn't stay down there and be chawed up easy."

After waiting for half an hour, in hopes the bear would depart, Harmer grew impatient, and drawing his pistol he fired, hitting him on his fore-paws. Instead of driving him away, the wound made him furious, and seizing their furs he tore and scattered them in every direction, and then taking post under the tree in which Harmer had taken refuge, he commenced deliberately to lick his paw, as if he had made up his mind to have satisfaction for the injury.

"He has concluded to stay and make our acquaintance," said Harry, "and I ain't got another speck of powder here. What's to be done?"

"Draw his attention to yourself," said Kaam, "while I slide down the tree and ascend the bank for our rifles."

Harmer did so by breaking off the branches and throwing them at him, but before Kaam reached the bank above the stream, the animal discovered him, and started furiously in chase. As Kaam seized upon Harmer's rifle, the bear, mouth open, raised the brow of the hill, and he fired directly down his throat. The effect of the shot made him turn a complete summerset, and, before he recovered himself, Kaam, who had descended and followed in pursuit, plunged his knife rapidly into his body, and the grizzly monster rolled over in a death-agony. A shot in a vital part by the remaining rifle finished his struggles. One paw of this powerful brute had grasped the branch of a fallen cottonwood, and in his struggles he forced his claw into the solid timber, almost to where the horny portion joins with the flesh. Removing his hide and claws as trophies, they

hunted up their frightened mules and pursued their march.

A few days after this occurrence, while moving up one of the south tributaries, they discovered signs, as if a large party had recently encamped there. The ground was much trampled by horses, and moccasin-tracks were marked deeply, as if made in a struggle. Further on they discovered signs of blood, and both became satisfied that a recent encounter had occurred there between some hostile tribes. They moved now with increased caution, and Harmer, to prevent Kaam from being surprised, would not permit him to stray from his side. Having reached a spot where signs of beaver were abundant, they set their traps and hid themselves in a grove overlooking the river. It was not safe to be even near their traps, for the cry of a captured beaver might call from the covert a cloud of hostile foes. In the course of an hour they fancied they heard the signal of a capture; they both stealthily approached the river bank, and discovered an emaciated Indian dragging his lame body from the direction of the traps, and bearing in his hand a young beaver. Harmer's first impulse was to fire, but his cool judgment made him pause.

"He looks as ef he wanted suthin' to eat dreadful bad," said Harry, "and ef that's the case, 'twould be mean to kill him for takin' a meal."

"It would be inhuman," answered Kaam.

"Yes; but thar ain't much human about them red fellers," replied the trapper. "We will see," he added, "whar he stows the animal, and ef he wants it to eat he kin hev it, but the hide are our property. It wouldn't be safe, anyhow, to take a shot at him, for mebbe thar is more o' his mother's children in the spot whar he came from."

They cautiously approached the thicket where he entered, and observed him voraciously devouring the animal. They emerged into sight, and dropping his plunder with all the stoical indifference of his race, he folded his arms and awaited death. Harry addressed him in Arapahoe, and his countenance lit up with a beam of pleasure. They approached, and Harry inquired of him why he was there alone in such a sick and destitute condition. He informed him that a party of his tribe had come down to the Pawnee hunting-grounds to chastise them for their many depredations, and in the encounter he had been badly wounded; escaping, however, he had gained the borders of that stream, and there sunk down exhausted. For days he had here existed on roots alone, and observing them set their traps, he thought if he could only obtain some animal food it would sufficiently strengthen him to proceed; he therefore ran the risk of being caught, and robbed their trap. When found he was nearly starved. Kaam and Harry examined his wound and found him badly hurt with a poisoned arrow. He informed them of an antidote, and how to prepare and apply it, and taking him under their care, they set about restoring him to health. The Indian had made applications himself to his wounds, but being unable, from lack of strength, to prepare it, his efforts only checked not cured the poison. The stream they were on was excellent hunting ground, and while they progressed in their philanthropic efforts, the Good Spirit prospered their other labors. The Indian in every way manifested his gratitude, and gave them to understand his life was at their service.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SINGULAR MEETING.

A FEW days after their encountering the wounded Arapahoe they were all seated beneath the shade of the long-leaved willows, smoking the calumet, when the Indian bent his ear to listen; nothing, however, could be heard, save the rippling of the stream, and the low whirring sound of the Ki-ka-dee.

They were conversing of the distant tribe, and Harry was cautiously inquiring about the sensation created when himself and Murtel fled. The Arapahoe remembered the circum-

stances well. One of the squaws, he said, named Yana—he had scarcely pronounced the name when his ear again caught some sound which imposed silence and attention. Inclining his ear to the earth, not a muscle moved, but like some bronzed statue he listened for a solution of the strange noise which had aroused him. Kaam, at this moment, formed a striking picture. On hearing the name of his mother spoken by one of her own tribe, the strange music awoke every faculty in his quick nature, and he leaned forward as if he would catch the words that followed, and, though of an unknown tongue, drink in their meaning. Harmer completed the tableau. Seeing the Indian's attention absorbed by some strange sound, he suspected danger—the Pawnees returned, perhaps; his rifle, therefore, was firmly clutched, with his finger on the trigger. Instantly, as like a cloud, a hundred dusky forms burst from the brush and underwood, encircling the little party.

All sprung to their feet, but they were quickly seized—as suddenly, though, were they released at the command of the wounded warrior, who proved to be a distinguished chief of the same tribe whose braves now surrounded them. He related to his warriors how he was wounded, his encounter with the trappers, and their kindness and humanity toward him. The relation drew forth manifestations of friendship from the whole assemblage. The chief invited them to journey along with them to their own hunting-grounds, where he assured them they should trap game unmolested by his own or any other tribe, and he added to his invitation a glowing description of the abundance of furs in the streams nearer the mountains.

Of this latter fact Harry was well aware, and the promise of protection given, he readily assented; the whole party soon were, therefore, on their march further westward. Kaam would now fain have inquired of the chief why he used his mother's name, and what he knew of her fate, but no favorable opportunity offering upon the march, he was forced to smother the anxious feeling in his breast.

On their march they reveled in plenty, for game was abundant. Nearly a week elapsed before they reached the principal village of the Kiowa, and here the whole tribe assembled to greet them. The safe arrival of the chief was made the occasion for a great feast, and rejoicing became general—the chief's lodge was a scene of the wildest and most extravagant joy.

One noble-looking squaw sat apart, in silence, within the chief's lodge. From the moment her eyes beheld Kaam they became riveted upon him, and a strange interest in her sprung up in the bosom of the half-breed. An opportunity offering, he pressed Harmer into his service as interpreter, and plied his inquiry with the chief to learn something of his mother.

The chief informed him that one of the women who accompanied the white trappers on the occasion of their flight, survived the cruel attempt to destroy her.

"And her name?" eagerly inquired Kaam.

"Is Yana!" said the chief.

"Oh, tell me," he cried, his tumultuous feelings racking his form with a tremor of painful excitement, "does she yet live?"

The chief pointed to the silent squaw we mentioned above, who had now, as if with some inward impulse, approached them, and merely exclaimed:

"Yana!"

"Mother, I am Kaam, thy son!" he shouted, and instantly they were locked in each other's arms.

Astonishment first pervaded the lodge on beholding them embrace, and this yielded to pleasure on learning the meaning of it. Harry related to the wondering group the particulars of their flight, and Murtel's cruelty and death. Yana, in return, related the circumstances attending the murder, and firing of the hut. She related that, suspicious of Murtel's intention to

desert her, she was unable to sleep soundly, yet she did not think for a moment he had any intention of inflicting upon her a bodily injury.

When the trappers departed from the hut she was wrapped in sleep, but the returning footsteps dissipated her drowsiness. Through the dimness of light, shed by the departing moon, she discovered it was her husband, who, lifting the child from beside her first, then drew his knife. Judging it was her he intended to slay, she raised herself in a half-sitting position, and as he struck the blow, she fell back with a moan of anguish at the thought of his murderous purpose.

Murtel, supposing it to be the sigh of dissolution, did not strike her again, but plunged the knife in the heart of the slumbering Kouna, fired the hut, and fled. The scream of agony uttered by the wounded Dove, quickened his footsteps. Yana, who was but slightly injured, dragged her sister's dead body from the flaming hut, and, swooning beside it, lay long unconscious of the terrible scene; at length she awoke, amid the gloom and darkness, to a full consciousness of the savage murder which had there been perpetrated by civilized hands.

Covering the remains of her dead sister, she joined the tribe, related the dreadful story, and, ere her words had ceased, a hundred braves had taken the path in pursuit; but as the sequel shows, they never overtook the fugitives—one had already paid the penalty of his crime by death, and the other was wandering alone, and in distress, amid the vast plains beyond the hunting-grounds.

Kaam was now received into the bosom of the tribe, where he soon became a decided favorite. His lodge was raised in the midst of the village, and his mother, Yana, took her place, with feelings of gladness, in the habitation of her long-lost son. She was the daughter of a distinguished brave, and sister of one of the present ruling chiefs of the Arapahoes. Kaam, therefore, took rank at once among the braves. Under his mother's care, aided by his own refined taste, his lodge in its interior soon wore the air of civilization. The home which his mind had painted to his waking thoughts and hopes was at last reached, and filled with the happiness of the present, he almost forgot the past, nor thought of the future. With these rude children of the American desert he wandered in unrestrained freedom, chasing the wild game wherever he listed; or, lying on the mat within his lodge, he whiled away the hours that were not devoted to the chase in learning from the lips of his new-found mother, the language of his tribe.

Harmer fully appreciated the advantages of their friendly position with the Indians, and felt desirous of profiting by it. He accordingly chose an opportunity to urge on Kaam the chance that presented itself for their establishing at the village a very profitable post. Kaam approved of the project, for his ambition was roused—he wished to rise to a commanding position, and he knew a trading-station placed there, under the control of his adopted father and himself, would be a strong auxiliary in aiding his advancement. The subject was broached in an assembly of the chiefs, and met their sanction, with this proviso, however, that no more white men came with the proposed innovation into the heart of their village. Had Harmer been allowed to frame the law for the government of the post, he would have inserted the very same provision—it hit his views exactly, and gave him and Kaam a monopoly of the trade.

The mountain tribes are very jealous of a white man's departure from them, when he has once become bound by friendship, and Harmer counseled Kaam to go upon the expedition to the Kansas trading-post himself; to this he assented, and preparations were forthwith made for his departure. Harry, besides furnishing him with a list of the goods he should bring with him, gave the young half-breed many and useful cautions in regard to his movements over the plains. He advised him to follow the

stream, after reaching the Fork, but at a distance sufficient to avoid a surprise, and by all means to shun encounter when he could escape by flight; moreover, to let no Indian approach him on his route.

When Yana heard of his intended departure, she clung around Kaam's neck with dread of their separation. From his infancy until manhood had dawned upon him, they had been severed, and now, when happiness appeared to be dawning upon them both, when "Daylight" had again dissipated the gloom which surrounded her, to lose him almost rent her heart in twain.

"Why will you go upon this dangerous journey, my Kaam?" she said; "if you perish, Yana will sing her death song and die, for she will be robbed of the light that cheered her heart. Go not into the hostile hunting grounds of the treacherous Pawnee, for, like a black wolf, he will follow your footsteps, and slay you while you sleep; or, hunger and hardship will make you his prey. Stay with your mother, Yana, here in the Arapahoe country, where the light of your eye will always be near to gladden her heart."

He listened to her pleading and almost yielded up his design, but the bauble distinction is a fascinating wile to lead the young heart—he resolved to go.

"I will go but this trip, mother, to the far trading-post of the white man," said Kaam, "and having obtained a supply of goods, and learned him the way to our village, I will depart no more from where you dwell."

She yielded a reluctant consent, and having provided himself with the necessary arms, he took with him a noble and fleet horse, besides his pack-mule, and turning his steps eastward, struck into the trail leading to the Kansas. It was early spring when he started, and the winds swept coldly over the vast plains, but he heeded not their fury; the mind of the young adventurer was wandering to the lodge where his mother wept in silence over his absence, and he would often, prompted by the love within, turn his eye backward in the direction from whence he came. He consoled himself with the assurance that Harmer would be kind to her, and he knew that the successful prosecution of his visit would not only enrich him, but elevate his position among the braves.

Ten days of his long march had been accomplished, and the sun of the eleventh had risen upon his lonely path, when he descried a single horseman upon the ridge he had just passed: From where he was he could easily distinguish that the horseman was an Indian. The other halted for a moment, and then waving his spear, which glanced brightly in the morning sunbeams he dashed at full speed upon Kaam's path. The young half-breed was in the country of the hostile Pawnee, and judging rightly, that the rider was of the tribe, he removed some necessary things from the back of his horse, that he might not be impeded, remounted and rode forward. By the time he had got fairly started, a dozen Indians were in sight, in hot pursuit. His good steed had been treasured for such emergency, and now the wisdom of having thus saved him was fully proven. Bounding away, he soon placed distance between the pursuer and the pursued. They halted on reaching his mule, searched the pack, gave the animal in charge of one of the party, and the rest continued the chase. The distance so perceptibly increased between them that one by one they fell off, until, as it approached evening, but one remained upon his track. For several hours they had continued the pursuit, hoping to tire down his horse, but the noble animal as yet exhibited no signs of distress. The Indians, to save their animals, would dismount, and holding the bridle, run by their side. Kaam practiced the same maneuver. They would then halt, sit down, and make signs of peace and friendship; but as soon as the young Arapahoe's horse had enjoyed a breathing spell, he would mount and pursue his way, and they would immediately follow upon his path. Thus had the

chase continued until, as we have stated, but one lingered upon his track, and Kaam began to covet his scalp. He guessed that this pertinacious savage now, more than ever, after witnessing his horse's speed and power of endurance, wished to possess him; and he was intent, he knew, on procuring the owner's scalp to grace the capture. Hoping that night would force him to stop, the Indian struggled to keep in sight, and trusted to his good fortune, aided by darkness, to yet obtain the prize.

About two hours before sunset Kaam made for a point of timber bordering the Arkansas, and while pursuing his way he turned to see how near the Indian had approached, when lo! he had disappeared. The young Arapahoe sat motionless upon his horse for some minutes, trying to account for his vanishing; at length he saw a ridge at about two miles distant, where a few young willows raised their branches above the level prairie, and he concluded he had passed over this and was now trying to head him off from the river.

Dismounting, to deceive him, for he felt certain he was watched, the young half-breed led his horse leisurely beneath the shadow of the leafless woods, and there, in a small hollow, surrounded with brush, he led him out of sight and pursued his way down the stream on foot. He progressed until he reached a ravine which ran up in the prairie, and, judging that the Pawnee had disappeared in this, he placed himself behind a fallen cottonwood at its margin, and listened for his approach, but no sound save the whistle of a bird broke the stillness that prevailed around him. Kaam was about to give him up and return to his horse, when a slight rustling, close behind him, attracted his attention. Placing his finger upon the trigger of his rifle, he turned his eye in the direction of the sound and observed the Indian almost noiselessly parting the bushes from his path with one hand, while with the other he held a half drawn arrow upon the string of his bow.

The savage had not yet seen the object of pursuit, but with dilated and painted visage he was stealing upon his track. The half-breed's second glance at him was along the trusty barrel of his rifle, and the click of its lock sent the ruthless pursuer reeling into the arms of death. No cry followed the wound—it was through the heart. Tearing his scalp, reeking from his head, he bore it with him together with the arms and ornaments of the dead warrior, as trophies of his sanguinary encounter. Descending then into the ravine, he followed it up to where the Pawnee had hid his horse, which he unfastened, led back to where his own was fastened, and mounting his animal, he led the other, that he might be at hand in case of an emergency.

CHAPTER IX.

SAVED FOR SACRIFICE.

OUR young adventurer at length reached Salty Fork in safety, and here he began to lose all further apprehension. Progressing by pleasant stages, he was gradually nearing the grand Forks of the Kansas. The air began to assume a milder, spring-like character, and congratulating himself on the approach of that genial season, he buoyantly threaded the mazes of his wild pathway. Having halted in a grove at noon to cook his meal of game, he discovered signs of footsteps, which again cautioned vigilance, and seizing his loaded rifle—that true friend of the mountaineer—he instantly set about reconnoitering the neighborhood.

Tracking the footprints through the grove, he emerged upon the borders of the stream, and here upon the shore he lost sight of them—the person had evidently crossed the Fork. On raising his eyes to scan the opposite side, he discovered the figure of a man standing upon a point overhanging the stream.

They silently scrutinized each other for some moments, and Kaam, believing the other to be an Indian, made peaceful signs to draw forth some manifestations which would show the

state of his feelings—the stranger imitated him in his answer. The half-breed then shouted to him in French—the language in which he had been educated—and on hearing this salutation, the supposed Indian began to descend from his perch with manifest confidence. Crossing a small ravine, he forded the Fork and joined the former.

The young Arapahoe asked why he was there, unarmed and alone! To which he replied he was one of a trapping party who were attacked and dispersed by the Pawnees—had been robbed of everything, and believed his companions had been captured. Kaam told him he was fortunate in his present encounter, for that he was bound on his way to the trading-post at the mouth of the Kansas, and had a spare horse to offer him. He invited the stranger to share his meal and they forthwith proceeded to discuss it.

While thus employed, a something indefinable in the countenance of his new companion troubled the heart of Kaam—he thought he had seen it before, but where his memory failed to inform him. They finished eating and pursued their journey, one congratulating himself on his good fortune at thus encountering a friendly wanderer where he had expected to find a foe, and the other exercising his mind to call up the associations connected with his fellow traveler.

They conversed but little during the remainder of the day, and at nightfall halted in the timber to sleep. Having eaten the remnants of their noon meal; they dare not yet light a fire at night to cook. They rolled themselves in their robes and commenced in low tones, a conversation in relation to the hostility of the tribe whose hunting-grounds they were then passing through.

"You are from St. Louis," said Kaam, abruptly breaking off the former subject.

"You are right," answered the stranger.

"And your name is—?" said Kaam, inquiringly.

"Adolph Murtel!" he answered.

The half-breed nearly mounted to his feet, and the hot blood tingled to his fingers' ends. He wondered now that he had not previously discovered him, but he remembered that when he had last seen him in St. Louis he was clad in the habiliments of civilization; that he was in robust health, and that his locks were then trimmed in tasteful style. Now his beard nearly covered his face—his hair hung in disorder—his body was clothed in buckskin, and his form and face were gaunt with hunger and hardship. There he was—his rival—and in his power. The man who had thrust himself between him and the one he had fondly, nay, madly loved—the legitimate son of his cruel father—the one who had slighted his Indian origin with a sneer was before him, a helpless wanderer, and in his power!

Would it not, he reasoned with himself, be a full measure of revenge to leave his body upon the plains for the wolf to feed upon—consign his admired form to death, where its bones, without sepulchre, would bleach in the prairie winds—where, in that vast solitude, the cold blast alone would howl his requiem? No, no, he answered to these whispers of revenge; she loves him, perhaps calls him husband, and longs for the time when he will return and press her to his bosom.

I will not plunge fair Julia in affliction by slaying him, although I hate him as I do the serpent I crush beneath my heel. No, I will guard him to safety, and then bid him to tell her that far away in the wilderness I fed and protected him—a nobler revenge, by far, than consigning him to death and her to mourning. Adolph also failed to recognize the studious half-breed companion of his early days in the wildly-attired form of his preserver.

"You are French," said he to Kaam.

"No," answered the ha'f-breed, "I have only been raised among the French."

"Of St. Louis?" inquired Adolph.

"Of Louisiana," replied Kaam.

This was in one respect correct, but in an-

other an evasion of Adolph's question. All west of the Mississippi was at that time designated by the old inhabitants as Louisiana. They spoke of St. Louis, and Adolph, to amuse his companion, began to relate his adventures in the town, boast of the admiration he commanded when there, and his many successes among the maidens of the old post. He at length mentioned a half-Indian, named Kaam, and his love for a French maiden named Julia. He would have paused could he, through the surrounding gloom, but have seen the workings of his face who was now drinking in his words. Unsuspicious of the torture he was inflicting, he continued, in a strain of levity, relating to the listening Arapahoe how he had compassed the ruin of his idol, after driving off her "Indian lover," and how she had besought him to save her from shame; but with a heartless jeer at her impurity, drove the orphan Julia under a cloud of shame; and then he laughed at the foolish credulity of women in general, and how readily the poor girl's former companions drank in and gave credence to his slanders. Kaam writhed where he lay, like a wounded panther preparing to spring. It needed but one move, and grasping him by the throat, he could search his body for the foul heart which had prompted such cruelty; but, restraining his passion with a groan, he, in affected calmness, inquired what became of the girl?

"She gave birth to a brat," said he, "which soon died, and some say the mother is breaking her heart after her half-breed lover. The old padre has taken both her soul and body under his priestly care."

Kaam would have wept if the destroyer had not been crouched beside him, but now rage was the master passion. Reveling in both heart and brain, it usurped him all, until, in his conceptions of revenge, he became a fiend. Banishing humanity from his bosom, he sealed its fountains up, and so, at that moment, in his inmost heart, he hated the whole white race with a perfect hatred.

They consigned themselves to sleep, or rather Adolph did, after congratulating himself with the idea that the relation of his personal adventures had half requited his companion for his kindness. Kaam lay and meditated the method of revenge. When morning broke they cooked their meal and started onward, beneath a cold and threatening sky, which soon began to pour a flood upon their pathway. The weather became very inclement, cold and disagreeable, and their marches by day, and pauses by night, were attended with hardships and sufferings such as is only known in those great deserts. To add to their difficulties, the horses began to fail, and they were forced to travel on foot, in order to save them; their way, too, became dull and cheerless, from the taciturnity of the half-breed. Adolph staggered along, shivering with the cold, damp blast, but the fire in his companion's veins made him invincible alike to cold and suffering. At length Adolph's horse died, and instantly Kaam surrendered up his steed to bear him forward. The young Arapahoe was fearful of being cheated of his prey; he, therefore, kept careful watch that he should not sink from exhaustion or fatigue.

After some days of this suffering, one of those sudden and terrible snow-storms, so bewildering to the travelers on the prairie, swept over them, and, unable to proceed, they lay down and covered themselves with their robes and waited its ceasing. They were within but a mile of the grove bordering the river, where they might have found shelter, but to attempt to move amid such a cloud of snow was folly—they would most certainly have lost their way. To their remaining horse they gave a free rein, that he might find shelter wherever he could, and they never saw him afterward. Silently, for a time, the white mantle spread itself like a winding-sheet around them, and then the blast came sweeping along, whirling it into a thousand fanciful eddies, lifting it from the earth again and driving it through the air with the force of a tornado; or, piling it in a mound

around the bodies of the prostrate trappers, it would seem to dance in sportive circles, as if rejoicing that they were trapped at last, caught upon the wild domain of the unpitying blast. Oh, how that rude wind howled over the cowering wanderers! And still it piled on, and roared, and sighed on its bleak way, until the trappers began to fear for their safety. The drift increased so rapidly that twice in the course of a few hours they were forced to dig their way out to obtain air—they were inclosed in a complete cave of snow.

While they thus lay beneath the peltings of the storm, Kaam entertained the thought of disclosing himself, for he believed they were both about to perish, but the ceasing of the storm made him silent; hope sprung up in the bosom of his companion, and he nursed it into strength with his words of encouragement. Digging their way out of the snow, they, with extreme labor, made a passage to the river, where, beneath the bluff, which had partially sheltered the shore, they again followed its windings.

The cold became intense, and the wind swept over them as if it would congeal their very blood to ice. Both knew that to drink the water of the stream, while exposed to such a temperature, would chill the body into inaction, and bind upon them the fetters of the northern blast. Kaam forbore, with Indian fortitude, but the exertion so parched the throat of his companion that he would no longer refrain. While the half-breed, therefore, moved ahead, he bent to a bubbling stream, whose waters were forming an icy mound by the side of the bluff, and quenching his thirst, he again pursued his way. His gait first became slow, and soon he began to totter. The half-breed, who had halted for him to come up, noticed his zigzag movements, but not having seen him drink, he supposed it was only fatigue; and to rest them both, he resolved to take shelter in a small cave in the face of the hill bordering the stream, which was situated but a few yards ahead. His companion now halted, and then, apparently arousing his energies for a further effort, he progressed a few steps, halted again, and at length overcome by the powerful influence of sleep, he sunk down upon the snow.

The freezing air, which seemed like the breath of the grim tyrant, Death, had folded him in its invisible robe, and had he been alone he never would have been able to shake it off. The young Arapahoe instantly divined his situation, and, hastening to the fallen trapper, he aroused him to a partial sense by force, and bearing his almost inanimate body to the sheltered cave, he wrapped it in their robes and hastened to build a fire.

Fuel was abundant, and soon the crackling flame from the heaped-up brush threw its grateful warmth into their welcome den, but still Adolph slept. Kaam, finding that he still remained insensible, notwithstanding the heat of the fire, at once guessed the whole truth of his situation, and proceeded to act accordingly. Heating some water, he added to it some cayenne pepper—a medicine carried in every careful trapper's pouch—and dosing his frigid companion with this warm mixture, he soon awoke him to life. Adolph murmured against his companion's positive treatment at first, but returning consciousness drew forth his thanks. None were due; it was not that he might enjoy the future and again bask in the smile of his conquests over either savage or civilized maidens that his companion preserved him; it was for a different purpose that he hung over him with such solicitude, that his hands labored to bring him back to vitality. It was for a selfish, a sanguinary, a terrible purpose he exerted himself. It was that he might make him a sacrifice upon the deep-dyed altar of revenge!

CHAPTER X. RETRIBUTION.

A DAY was spent in fully resuscitating Adolph. Every exertion that could tend to bring him back to vigor was used by his com-

panion. When morning broke on the succeeding day, a sensible change was manifest in the air—the cold had abated, the bright sun shone out upon earth's white mantle, and the wind had calmed down almost to a zephyr. Adolph, too, was on his feet, ready for the march, and they again set out. They found the snow less deep as they progressed, and this was a source of congratulation, for, before it melted and swelled the tributaries, they hoped to reach beyond its influence. Solomon's Fork was in due time gained, and they were safely beyond the region of the storm, wending their way toward the main river, which reached, they continued down its banks, each day breathing more and more of the advancing summer, and greeting, with their grateful eyes and senses, the beauty and increase of unfolding vegetation. The wanderers again felt themselves safe.

On a bright evening in the latter part of May they arrived at a point upon the Kausas, within sight of the broad Missouri, whose yellow waters, lit by the departing sunbeams, rolled onward in a turbid flood toward the distant sea. Here they halted for the night, resolving to make a short morning march to the post, some ten miles distant. From the rocky ridge where they lay encamped they could almost discern the goal of their wishes, that bourne to attain which they had undergone so many perils and hardships. Adolph was gay with the pleasing thought that his journey's end was nigh. His companion sat down beside him and looked with cold thoughtfulness into his eyes—it was the gaze of iron resolution, contemplating a dark and savage act. He tried to read in the beaming countenance before him, where lurked the heartless depravity that could win innocence, and yet gloat over the fell deed—that would pour obloquy upon one of the fairest of womankind, who had yielded up everything to him—heart, virtue, ay, even life—for, by his own account, she was pining away in sorrow—and yet make a mockery of her sufferings and sneer at her fall. An hour more and Adolph slept, his dreams peopled by happy visions of the future. No fear disturbed them, for being below the regions of the most hostile tribes his mind, conscious of safety, yielded itself up to quiet repose; but not so Kaam—taking off the cords that bound his pack, he tied the limbs of his sleeping companion. The tightly drawn cords stagnated the sleeper's blood, and changed the color of his dreams, for he began to moan, and at last awoke, filled with an indefinable feeling of dread. The fire burned fitfully up, throwing but an uncertain light upon surrounding objects, and by its aid he was unable to make out anything distinctly. In vain he struggled to release himself, for in attempting to roll toward the fire to burn his bonds loose, he found that he was tied hand and foot to the trees that formed his canopy. Believing now that the Indians had stolen in while he slept and slain his companion, he waited patiently for morning to reveal his fate. As the light of the east silently crept over objects, giving them shape and color, he distinguished the form of his companion standing with his arms folded, watching the gradual dawning of day. He called to him, but received no response—like a statue, the figure kept its position. At length the golden beams of the day-god began to gild the departing shadows of night, and with his first ray the half-breed turned abruptly to his companion, with the boding expression:

"Destroyer of innocence, thy hour has come!"

"What do you mean?" inquired Adolph.

"That you shall here die!" hissed the half-breed through his clinched teeth.

"For what?" inquired his startled victim.

"What injury have I ever inflicted on you that you should kill me? If I have wronged you, tell me in what, and I will make reparation."

"Ah, ha! ha!" with bitter irony laughed the determined avenger. "You plead too late—reparation is out of your power. You ask what you have done? and I answer the worst

of wrongs—made a wanton and outcast of one I loved above all else on earth, and I have sworn to avenge both her and me. Upon the arm that will let out your life's blood I wear the pledge which bound me to her forever, if not as a husband and protector, as an avenger. Nay, more—"

Here he broke off his words, and suddenly unloosing the cords which bound Adolph to the earth, he dragged his body to the tree where he himself had stood watching the approach of day, and binding him erect, his face toward the now beaming sun, he remarked, with all the calmness of a determined purpose:

"I will tell you, before the earth drinks up your blood, so many reasons why you should die by my hands, that you will admit the justice of the deed."

Here Adolph made a desperate struggle to free himself from the cords which bound him, but he was a child within the grasp of the im-bittered half-breed.

"You cannot avert your fate," said Kaam. "At the slightest chance of that my knife would seal your doom."

With cool deliberation, he now cut Adolph's hunting-shirt and leggins from his body, and opening a vein in his arm with the point of his knife, he stood, with a burning eye, but visage immovable as stone, watching the red current trickle forth.

"Why do you kill me?" exclaimed the now terrified trapper. "What is my crime?"

"Murder!" shouted Kaam, "not merely murder of the body but of the soul."

Here, as if urged by the fury of his hatred, and the thoughts of the wrong, he opened a dozen fountains in the body of his victim, and let their red currents flow to appease his wrathful soul.

"Act like a human being, and stab me to the heart at once," cried Adolph, "but do not torture me with this slow murder as if you were a fiend."

"No," replied Kaam, "by doing so I would forego my dearest revenge—cut short the enjoyment of seeing death infold you in its cold embrace. I could have killed you upon the prairie—left you beneath the power of the wintery blast to perish amid the snow, but that would have robbed me of this great hour of sacrifice. I preferred to nurse you back into life, strengthen your body, and guard you safely within sight of the very haven of our pursuit. There rolls the golden-tinted flood of the turbid Missouri—beyond that point to the right, but a few miles, lies our destination—around us the summer birds are sweetly caroling, and the bright, warm sun is kissing all animated nature with a genial kindness; yet, here, within sight of safety, and surrounded with all these glad things, you die, and by the hand of Kaam, the Arapahoe half breed—the revenger of Julia Severance!"

"My curse forever hang upon you, dog of an Indian," cried the infuriated and desperate prisoner.

"The Great Spirit of both the white man and the Indian has said that such as you have no power to curse," answered Kaam.

Then, seating himself beside the bleeding form of the dying trapper, he turned his face toward the sun, and began to pour forth, as in a song of death, his reasons for the bloody deed.

"My mother saved Edward Murtel from death," said he, "and he requited her by stabbing her in the dark while she slept, killing her sister, and stealing her child—me, Kaam—that he might sell me into perpetual slavery. You are the son of this man, and so am I. I never wronged you; yet you stole between me and her I fondly loved—not to shelter her in the arms of manly affection, but to rob her of her purity, and then cast her out to die. You wrapped her in a mantle of shame, and then joined in the howl of scorn which drove her forth to despair. You slew her soul first and then strove to destroy the body, that its degradation might not upbraid your heartless cruelty. Ah! you groan at this tale of wrong, but you did not spare, when you might, the

innocent victim. The Great Spirit hath said in his written word that the sins of the father shall be visited upon the children—he hath recorded thy doom; therefore, Adolph Murtel, thou shalt die!"

Kaam rose to end the scene of sacrifice, but his victim hung in his cords, immovable as stone—quiet as death! Leaving his body to the wolves, he continued his journey to the trading-post.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LOVED AND LOST ONE.

As he progressed, the desire to see Julia grew strong within him, not that he had a single thought of upbraiding her, no! but to comfort her. He wished to prove to her how holy, how above his rival that feeling was which had taken possession of his own bosom. From his face he banished all trace of the feeling which had saddened it, and placing thereupon a smile, he met, with all the stoical indifference of a true savage, the officer commanding the Kansas post. To him he related the circumstances attending the journey of Harmer and himself into the Arapahoe country, the friendly disposition of the tribe, and the prospects held out for a lucrative trade with them. The officer received him with great kindness, and stated that he would send an outfit in his charge at once, but that the necessary goods had to be obtained at St. Louis, and, as the only party going thither that season had started some few days previous, he saw no way of profiting by the position attained by them in the tribe, unless Kaam would consent to pursue the party on their way down, and convey to them letters to make the necessary purchases. To this Kaam at once agreed, and the officer in command further requested that he would continue on with the company to their destination, aid them to select the outfit, and superintend its transportation. This would afford him an opportunity of again seeing Julia, and he consented. His heart palpitated with hope again as the feeling of love revived within him. He resolved, if she would consent, to bear the stricken Julia away where the finger of scorn would not point at her—where the censorious eyes of civilization would never intrude upon her, and where, amid the children of the forest, could he present her with a home whose household gods would not remind her of her undoing. Looking at the bracelet which circled his arm, he kissed it with renewed devotion.

In his light pirogue he, in the course of a few days, overtook the party preceding him, who were making their way down in a Mackinaw boat, and acquainting them with his mission, he took in the leader of the company, and together they pushed their way to the distant city. How tumultuous were the thoughts which agitated the breast of this imbibed man as he neared the home of her he so dearly loved, and who had been so cruelly deceived! As his mind dwelt upon this subject, he fancied that the stars of night looked down approvingly upon the deed of vengeance he had perpetrated, and lit up his pathway to the injured Julia's succor. St. Louis was at length reached, and without delay he sought out the good old padre. On calling at the parsonage, he learned that he was absent on a visit of mercy to a dying fellow-creature, and ascertaining the direction, Kaam flew to seek him out—his impatience would brook of no delay. On reaching the habitation designated—a small low French building of stone, surrounded by a portico—he knocked at the door, and the aged padre himself opened it. Beholding a half-savage figure before him, he started back, shaded his eyes, and scanned him with suspicion.

"Do you not know me, father?" cried the half-breed; "I am Kaam, thy pupil, in search of Julia. Tell me at once, if you ever loved me, where she can be found?"

A faint shriek echoed his eager inquiry, and the old man drew him within the building.

"Come hither, my son," said he, leading Kaam at the same time to a low couch in one

corner of the apartment. Before the young Arapahoe lay the emaciated and sinking form of poor Julia. He had come, directed as by the finger of Fate, to see her die. The announcement of his name had thrown her into a swoon, from which the flickering lamp of life slowly struggled back to light and consciousness, and with the returning glimmer of that feeble ray she recognized him. With a happy smile upon her lips she reached out her wasted hand toward him, and whispered his name:

"Kaam!"

It was the first word she had spoken for hours, and it was the *last*—in giving it utterance she died. Upon the little wrist he held was the pledge of love she had braided from his locks and the hand that clasped hers was encircled by her own tress dyed with the blood of her destroyer. Upon poor Julia's features were stamped the impress of peace, as if some blessed angel, commissioned by Heaven, had set its high seal of forgiveness there.

Together they knelt by her bedside—the aged and holy father of the church, and his pupil, the Arapahoe—where they mingled their prayers for the repose of the departed one. Ere Kaam arose from his knees, and while he held the stiffening hand of her he loved, he registered an oath of vengeance between himself and the white race forever. He swore to be their foe until death—to hold no faith with them, but, with treacherous revenge, to visit on all alike an indiscriminate hatred, and, so vowed, he turned his back at once upon the white men and their habitations. The old priest thought to stay him, but, putting aside his aged form, he plunged into the pathless woods, struck out for the distant hills, and alone, with heart wounded to the core, he journeyed toward the setting sun. His path was a weary one, lit by no bright thoughts, but, on the contrary, haunted by feelings of bitterness and despair. We are wrong—one ray cast a beam of love upon it—the remembrance of his mother, Yana—love for her prevented every feeling of affection from dying within him, and when sinking under an accumulation of hardship and grief, a thought of her would nerve his form and strengthen him to press onward, that he might again lay his throbbing temples upon her bosom, and draw peace from her words of affection.

After weeks of weary marching, he began to approach the head of "Republican Fork," the source of the River Kansas; and on every side he saw numerous signs of Indians, which indicated clearly that bands from other tribes than his own were in the Arapahoe country, hunting buffalo. It now became necessary to observe great caution to prevent falling into the hands of the strangers, who were, no doubt, Pawnees. Ascending a high ridge which overlooked the country before him for many miles he descried a herd of buffalo in the distant prairie, which from the agitation among them, he had no doubt were undergoing attack from a party of hunters. Keeping the top of the ridge, he pursued his way until he neared the animals, when he perceived that the hunters were encircling the herd—at the same time he discovered another party of Indians, and himself nearly fell into their ambuscade. They were Pawnees, who were hemming in the unsuspecting hunters of the other tribe. Kaam watched the Pawnees until he could not mistake their purpose, and waited until the onslaught was made upon the herd.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

ON seeing the band in danger, Kaam resolved to make a diversion in favor of his friends that would acquaint them with their danger. Accordingly he gave utterance to the Arapahoe alarm. The hunting party ceased their maneuvers in a moment, and answered with a general yell, while, at the same time, the party in ambush drew out of the high prairie grass into the willow grove upon the bluff of the stream. Kaam's way being now uninter-

rupted, he descended to his friends, but he was so like a specter, so worn with anguish and hardship, that at first he was not recognized. With an eye burning like fire, in anticipation of the approaching conflict, he acquainted the party, among whom he found Harmer, with the dangerous proximity of their foes, and proposed a scheme for their punishment, which at first sight promised, and by after action was confirmed to be, a severe and deadly device to pay them for their many hostilities. It was late in the season, the grass in the prairie was high, and the wind blew strong over it in the direction of the willow grove, where the Pawnees had taken shelter. Placing a few warriors at some distance in the plains, he ordered them, at a given signal, to fire the grass in different directions, and keep up a war-cry in the rear of the smoke and flame. This would drive their foes to flight by way of the river. Then descending with the rest of the band, nearly eighty in number, Kaam took a position in ambush, at the foot of a ravine leading from the grove, where his foes were posted. Here awaiting them, the signal was given, the flame communicated, and, like a torrent, the fire curling and hissing and bounding, pressed on toward the river, bearing along with its hot breath a cloud of blinding and stifling smoke. The Pawnees were unable to hold their position, for the hot blast made it insufferable; finding a ravine leading to the river, they very naturally entered it, and rushing down, their vision obscured by the cloud that enveloped them, they fell an easy prey to the imbibed Arapahoes. A cloud of arrows met the first rush of the foe, and in the next moment, while the bewildered Pawnees were struggling for sight, and for an avenue of escape, Kaam and Harmer, heading their friends, rolled like an avalanche of death in their path, and swept them away with an indiscriminate slaughter. The affrighted foe fought and yelled their war-cry in vain, for, surrounded by an implacable enemy, their numbers melted away, and their cry became weak; at length a portion of them turned back to the grove, fled along the bluff to a point overhanging the river and leaped into the flood. But twenty out of a hundred thus escaped to tell the sad tale to their tribe!

The Arapahoes, amid shouts of triumph, returned to their village, and the cry of victory was dispatched by runners to every portion of the tribe. Kaam, the hero of the fight, was hailed with pride by the young, and respect by the old. He had won his title to citizenship, and a dozen gory badges of his prowess hung dangling at his belt. The once proud hearted half-breed, whose aspirations, under the influence of civilization, had been all refined, now stood among this wild tribe, with gory knife and human trophies, an acknowledged savage! He was invested with the mantle of renown by the elders of the tribe, and wild orgies ushered him to his place of distinction; strange feasts were spread, and the pantomime of this great slaughter was enacted before the admiring Arapahoes. But one thing occurred to mar the great occasion, and that was the death of Harry Harmer. While leading a portion of the Arapahoes in the fight, he was pierced through and through by the arrow of a treacherous Pawnee, and his body was picked up among the slain. The tribe buried his remains with respectful ceremony, and when the earth had covered him, every tie which bound Kaam to the whites was severed. He lives yet among his people, feared and respected, the chief leader of this warlike race. Indian maiden has never yet found welcome in his lodge, but alone with his mother, he dispenses the laws of the tribe, and rules with absolute sway these wild children of the American desert. His hatred to the whites is unyielding, and he declares himself ever upon the war-path against them. A settled gloom hangs on his brow, and his people no longer call him Kaam, or "Daylight," but Mo Kah, or "Night."

THE END.

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